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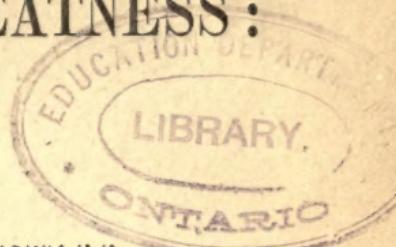
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ENGLAND'S GREATNESS.

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ENGLAND'S GREATNESS:

ITS



Rise and Progress

IN

GOVERNMENT, LAWS, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL LIFE;
AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE, AND MANUFACTURES;
SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS.

From the Earliest Period to the Peace of Paris.

By JOHN WADE,

V.P. INSTITUT D'AFRIQUE (HISTORICAL SECTION), PARIS;

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRODUCTIVE CLASSES";
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LONDON:

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P R E F A C E.

THE science of Civilisation is varied and extensive. It may be viewed in relation either to a fixed and Eastern, or to a progressive and Western, type of development; — under its onward aspect, whether its range is limited or indefinite; or whether it has a climax and prescribed period of meridian effulgence, receding into primitive torpor, rudeness, and barbaric violence. Comparatively it may be considered in relation to the superiority of modern over ancient refinement; and next might be entertained the important problem on the more influential causes of national elevation. Are they most dependent on climate or race; on insular, continental, or other geographical position; or, in a greater degree than on any of these material influences, is a high and enduring state of public felicity most closely associated with the excellence of political and civil institutions, or of moral and religious dispensations?

History, science, and classical learning afford ample elucidations of these several inquiries. But,

tempting as this field of research undoubtedly is, I have considered it secondary to the more special and practical object I had in view; though it would perhaps have been impossible to fix upon a more diversified, interesting, and instructive example of national evolution, than that afforded by the growth of the British empire.

In tracing the progress of British civilisation, I have felt the expediency of deviating from a distinguished French model. M. Guizot's historical research and his power both of analysis and generalisation cannot be easily surpassed; but it appeared to me that the civilisation of any community, and especially that of England, is of a composite order, and that a history of its rise cannot with justice be restricted to an exposition of the progress of its political or civil institutions. The triumphs of the Three Estates of the realm, in maturing constitutional guarantees, offer a noble theme for exultation; but they form only part of many constituents of existing acquisitions. King, Lords, and Commons may have laid the foundation of the national edifice, and wisely and vigorously aided the erection of the superstructure; but the contribution of materials, and even of the ornamentation, is certainly in part traceable to other sources. A neglect of these auxiliary appliances would have been infidelity to my mission, and the result not a faithful

portraiture of the concurring elements of science, genius, industrial enterprise, and perseverance, by which Great Britain has been raised to a foremost place among civilised states.

A wider spread of canvas was therefore indispensable to the due fulfilment of my undertaking. It became necessary that I should not only define the civil and ecclesiastical progress of the country, but its industrial, intellectual, and artistical career; to outline not only its successive advances in political and social distinctions, but in its agriculture, commerce and manufactures, science, literature, fine and useful arts. In all these England is preeminent; they make up the aggregate of her existing vivid life; and to solve the phenomena of our present organisation, it was essential to glance at our achievements in each line of pursuit, from commencement to completion.

It was a task for years and many volumes; but it admitted either of a detailed or general treatment; and I was not so presumptuous as to grapple with it in its widest compass. Yet my aim has been precise, clear, and definite. It has been to supply a deficiency in English Literature, and compendiously, but in sufficient breadth of facts and philosophy, to exemplify to the historical student or more elaborate inquirer the mystery of England's power, diversified interests, and resplendent name. With what success I have done this, I will not hazard an opinion; I

am fully sensible of deficiencies, and only deeply conscious of an earnest effort to be complete, just, and true. Yet a devotion to my subject from perhaps a just pride in its grandeur, and my previous literary pursuits, may have given me, in public estimation, some aptitude for my task, and rendered me not wholly incompetent to its successful execution.

All the great departments of human knowledge admit of subdivisions and different modes of presentation. The province of Biography is individual life ; that of History, public events and occurrences. These last, when productive of momentous vicissitudes, seldom appear single, but are linked together in groups ; and from a general or family designation of them we may not only catch the living likeness of the age, but its distinctive attributes and springs of movement. The Protestant Reformation, for instance, was not Martin Luther's work alone, but the matured result of John Wickliffe's labours and the discovery of printing, co-operating with the vices of the Clergy and the corruptions of the Church. The great revolutionary eras of England and France offer corresponding illustrations. In both, the combined weakness, tyranny, and bigotry of the reigning dynasties,—of the Stuarts in one and the Bourbons in the other,—were prominent causes of the convulsive action of each ; in England coupled with sectarian theology, and the spirit of freedom inherent in the

Anglo-Saxon race; in France conjoined with the extreme misery of the people, the brilliant appeals of her *literati*, and the degeneracy of the privileged orders.

These form the approximate principles upon which, in the main, I have sought to construct my work. It is not an abridgment of British history, or a brief narrative of political progress, with which every one is familiar; but a condensed embodiment in spirit and form of national development, as characterised by its most remarkable epochs; illustrated by individual traits and memorable transitions; and exemplified in the contemporary growth of art, industry, intellect, social life and gradations. History, biography, science, and literature, in different degrees, have been laid under contribution to complete the national picture.

If I have succeeded in my panoramic exhibition, this work may prove a useful manual to foreigners as well as to ourselves. It will be seen in the sequel that England, although later in the field, has by a cautious but assured step in threading the dark and untried passages of her career, first overtaken and next outstripped the more precocious states of Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. She is now looked up to, though still imperfect and progressive. Nations are emulous of our popular institutions, which combine national wisdom and strength with individual freedom and

prosperity. But most of all they are dazzled with our material affluence, and impatient to share its fruits. In this we feel no alarm or jealousy. Emancipated from the narrow views fostered in past times of error, we now sympathise in the struggles of all nations for improvement, knowing that we shall benefit by their success in common with themselves, and only asking them to adopt a reciprocally generous and enlightened spirit of advancement.

*Sloane Street, Belgravia,
October, 1856.*

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Chief Agencies conducive to England's Greatness.—The Aristocracy and Productive Orders. — Past and Present Civil Agitation.—Fusion of Classes and Concurrence of Purpose.—Decline of Parties, from Settlement of Great Question, and Harmony of the Productive Interests.—Unequalled Prosperity of Agriculture and Commerce.—Elements of National Strength. — Quietude of the Religious, Philosophical, and Literary World.—No Symptoms of National Degeneracy from the pervading Tranquillity.—Tendency to Refinement among the Masses.—Characteristics of Crime.—Increase of Property, and Diminution of Personal Offences.—Reform of Criminals. — Improvements in Oxford and Cambridge Universities.—Preliminary Examination of Candidates for the Civil Departments of the Government.—Disposition to look through Mediæval Spectacles.—New Palace of Westminster and the Clubhouses.—Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Old Masters.—Prospective Metropolitan Improvements - 782

ENGLAND'S GREATNESS.

CHAPTER I.

ROMAN AND ANGLO-SAXON DOMINATION.

Obscure origin of States.—Aborigines of Britain.—Roman Invasion.—Condition of the Natives.—Benefits from Roman Dominion.—Origin of the Anglo-Saxons; Changes under the New Mastery.—Proportion of Villeins, Cottars, and Slaves.—Celtic traces in Language and Usages.—Roman Civilisation preserved.—Anglo-Saxon Laws and Institutions; Laws of Alfred.—Each Subjugation tended to National Improvement.—Antiquities of the Ante-Norman Period.—Erroneous Ascription of Stonehenge and the Round Towers.

THE origin of most communities is necessarily obscure. They have generally commenced with an untutored race; but savages can have no history any more than an adult of his earliest childhood. The essentials of history are monuments, records, tradition or oral testimony; but these form elements of civilisation found only in nations who have made some advance in the arts of life, by which the memory of their acts and attainments is preserved and transmitted. Tribes of people that are apparently

indigenous, or little advanced from the natural state, do not command such requisites ; they may exist for ages, and then disappear, leaving no trace of their ephemeral passage any more than the wild animal with which they have been associated. In this way it is likely that for a long course of time prior to the historic age all the great continents and islands of the earth were peopled by successive flights of inhabitants, the strongest overpowering or extirpating their weaker predecessors. But the result is different with more recent states, that spring from colonies planted by civilised ancestors, and which, from the outset, commence with the accumulated acquisitions of the mother country. The earliest social developments of these offer no unrecorded blank, but the narrative of their progress is complete from the beginning of their career.

In Britain the first, or aboriginal, settlers appear to have been in the former or non-historical stage of development ; and little reliable evidence can be collected by whom, or when, or how, the island came to be inhabited. The most probable conjecture is that it was peopled from the adjacent continent, and the earliest visitors were of the Celtic race. This race had immemorially occupied the entire of Central and Western Europe, the northern and eastern parts being peopled by the Teutones or Gothic nations, and who at a later period possessed themselves of the south and south-eastern parts of Britain by driving inland their Celtic predecessors.

Similar ties in language, manners, superstitions, and government attest the Celtic derivation of the early Britons. The topographical nomenclature of the country is generally Celtic, especially the names of the more unchangeable parts of nature, as of rivers, mountains, and lakes. The Saxons, who subverted and tried to change

everything, gave new names to the towns and villages; but the geographical names which are usually founded on less variable physical characteristics of the objects to which they are applied mostly survived this compulsory vicissitude.

Julius Cæsar, who made the first descent on the island B. C. 53, found the Britons barbarous, but not in the savage state. They were divided into forty nations or tribes, who were often at war, but who united their forces to resist a common enemy. Those occupying the inland and northern parts of the island were the least cultivated, clothing themselves with the skins of beasts, and living chiefly on the spontaneous fruits of the earth and by the pasturing of cattle. The occupants of the south and south-eastern coast are conjectured to have been immigrants from Belgic Gaul, and were more civilised, and apparently on a similar level of social advancement with the existing Kaffirs and other semi-barbarous races of Africa. Their dress was of their own manufacture, and consisted of a square mantle, covering a vest and trowsers, encircled with a belt. Their houses were built of wood, covered with straw; some had stone foundations, with a conical roof pierced in the centre, for the twofold purpose of admitting the light and letting out the smoke.

It does not appear that the Britons had any assemblage of houses deserving the name of a town. "What they call a town," says Cæsar, "is a tract of woody country surrounded by a vallum or high bank and a ditch, for the security of themselves and cattle against the incursions of their enemies;" and Strabo remarks, "The forests of the Britons are their cities, for when they have enclosed a very large circuit with felled trees, they build within it houses for themselves and hovels for their cattle. These buildings are very slight, and not designed for long dura-

tion." Being mostly a pastoral people, permanent dwellings and dense inhabitancy were unsuited to the locomotive and scattered nature of their industry; but it is likely the habits of the Belgic Gauls were somewhat different. These had made some progress in husbandry, knew the use of marl as a manure, and raised more corn than was necessary for their own consumption. They had also learnt the art of making linen, of dyeing wool, yarn, and cloth different colours, and of bleaching and washing. With the uses of tin, lead, and copper, they were acquainted, but of iron they knew little. Some vessels of earthenware have been found in barrows which are supposed to have been the works of ancient Britons.

The formidable resistance they offered to Julius Cæsar showed they had made considerable progress in the art of war, and were not wholly unskilled in that of diplomacy. They tried by an embassy to retard or divert Cæsar's invasion; failing in that, they became defiant in their demonstrations, imprisoning his messengers and boldly opposing the landing of his legions, one of which was near being surrounded and cut off. In these conflicts the Britons used war-chariots, but, unlike the Romans, their persons were unprotected by helmets and breastplates. The undertaking soon appeared to the Romans of a more serious character than they had calculated upon, and their force in this first attempt proved inadequate to its purpose, besides experiencing serious disasters from ignorance of tidal phenomena. Accustomed to the low tides of the Mediterranean, they inadvertently suffered many of their vessels to be swept from the beach and lost by the higher tides of the British seas; in addition, many ships conveying over cavalry were dispersed in a storm.

The second descent of Cæsar in the spring of the fol-

lowing year was made with treble the force of his descent in the preceding autumn; his armament, consisting of 800 vessels, having on board five legions and 2000 cavalry, the total force mustering 32,000 men. On this occasion Cæsar spent six months in the island, defeating the Britons near Canterbury, and traversing the counties of Kent and Surrey, and part of Hereford, having crossed the Thames near Chertsey, and penetrated to Verulam, the present St. Albans. Both his landings seem to have been effected at the same place, probably on the flat shore between Walmer Castle and Sandwich, and the point of embarkation from the Gallic coast was Portus Itius, near Boulogne.

Upwards of 100 years elapsed before South Britain was wholly subjugated. Agricola, A. D. 83, was the first to bring it into the form of a province, introducing the Roman laws, language, architecture, habits, and customs. Under this governor the Roman dominion in the island reached its utmost permanent limit to the North. It was favourable to the natives, protecting them from the irruptions of their barbarous neighbours the Picts and Caledonians, and familiarising them to many improvements. Not the least of these was the entire extirpation of Druidism. Generally, the Romans did not interfere with the religious worship of the nations they subdued; but the ascendancy of this savage superstition, from the dominant influence it exercised over the people, was incompatible with the establishment of their authority, and was well exchanged for Roman roads, municipal incorporations, and educational institutions. Thirty-three towns, from Winchester to Inverness, were indebted for civic immunities to the conquerors. The choice of magistrates and councils was left to the inhabitants, and in them were vested the police, corporate property, care of public

worship, and a portion of judicial power. During the Roman sway Christianity was introduced, and had become widely diffused towards the close of the fourth century.

The government of the Romans subsisted five centuries, and it was only surrendered when civil dissensions among themselves and the pressure of external enemies nearer home compelled them to withdraw their garrisons from remote settlements. After their departure the island became a prey to the Saxons, a fierce people of Gothic origin, inhabiting the countries bordering on the Baltic. These invaders had been trained to war in conflicts with the Romans on their frontier, and pillage by land and piracy by sea formed their chief occupations. At first they were called in to assist the Britons against the Picts and Scots; but from auxiliaries they became masters, and, subjugating the best part of the country, subdivided it into seven petty kingdoms under the name of the Heptarchy. The sovereignty of these invaders lasted till the era of the Norman Conquest, and was only interrupted by the piratical incursions of the Danes, who repeatedly laid waste or levied contributions on the richest districts of the island.

The Saxons were composed of three nations or tribes, one of which tribes was termed Angles, who dwelt in Jutland, and also occupied a district called Anglen, in Holstein, whence the terms Anglo-Saxon and the proud name of England have been derived. The ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain nearly equalled in duration that of the Romans, making together the long term of 1000 years, exceeding the later period that has elapsed from the Norman Conquest. An important inquiry has been, what became of the primitive inhabitants at the close of these two dominations? On the

landing of Julius Cæsar the population of Britain has been estimated at 760,000, and the portion of this number that survived the struggle for mastery it is probable, were left undisturbed in their possessions and occupations. The Romans, in extending their power, sought only submission and contributions in men and money, and not to exterminate the conquered. Pending their mild and protective administration, the country is considered to have been eminently prosperous, and to have greatly increased in wealth and people. This accounts for the fact that, despite of the barbarous rule of the Saxons, the population had considerably more than doubled at the close of their disorderly government, amounting, it is supposed, to 1,800,000. Of this number, two-thirds subsisted in different degrees of servitude, but the number of serfs or slaves did not exceed one-seventh part of the larger laborious classes of villeins, bordars, and cottars.

Those existing in different degrees of servitude, it is probable, were the remains of the ancient Britons or Romanised Celts that had neither been driven into Wales nor perished in the massacres of the Saxons. That many of the males even would survive the ruthless desolation of the invaders is probable. The Saxons would spare a portion of the men for servile uses, for handicraft arts, to till the land and take care of the cattle; and it has been suggested that, from similar selfish motives, all the women would escape*, especially as, according to St. Augustine's description, they were of surpassing beauty—not Angles merely, but veritable “angels.” Many circumstances are favourable to this conjecture. The Saxons came by sea, and had to fight their way in the

* Creasy's *Rise and Progress of the English Constitution.*

island; and though some warriors might be accompanied by their Rowenas, others would be less provided, and would gladly select partners from among the conquered race. It may have been partly a desire of undisturbed possession of the great prize of the fair daughters of Britain, that gave edge to the sword of the invaders, contributing likewise to preserve, in a large proportion, the original British element in the Anglo-Saxon population.

Confirmatory of this view are traceable peculiarities in the language. Exclusive of the Celtic words of the English tongue, which can be proved either to be of late introduction or common to both Celts and Germans, certain words have been retained from the original Celtic of the island. These words, besides proper names, are about thirty in number, and all apply either to servile or feminine occupations. The genuine Celtic words are,— basket, barrow, button, bran, clout, crock, crook, gusset, kiln, cock (in cock-boat), dainty, darn, tenter (in tenter-hook), fleam, flaw, funnel, gyve, griddel (gridiron), gruel, welt, wicket, gown, wire, mesh, mattock, mop, rail, rasher, rug, solder, size (glue), tackle. These words are all menial in application, as might be expected, agreeably with Mr. Creasy's hypothesis. The Saxon master would naturally compel the use of his native tongue in his household, but might leave to his British dame her own familiar names in housewifery, and to his thrall his own terms in husbandry.

Prior to the Norman epoch, and concluding this introductory period of British history, it is essential more distinctly to recapitulate the peculiar features of progress in civilisation made in Britain under the successive ascendancies of the first conquerors and their successors the Anglo-Saxons.

The Romans were sharp collectors of tribute, but

deeply impressed with the importance of order and obedience in a government derived from their superior military organisation. Hence in all their towns were established apt administrative institutions, comprising, under a regular gradation of authority, excellent provisions for the administration of justice, the preservation of the peace, the removal of nuisances, and even for popular education ; for it is a fact that the Romans had normal schools to qualify teachers to instruct the youth of the provinces, and the expense of which was defrayed by a public assessment.

Their municipal polity was introduced into Britain. From Winchester to Inverness, thirty-three towns, as already remarked, were incorporated with various constitutions and degrees of dignity. Generally, the inhabitants were divided into two principal classes, decurions and plebeians : the former constituted the town-councils. Each member was succeeded by his sons, and new decurions were occasionally added from the more wealthy plebeians. The decurions were the landowners of the district ; property in land being an indispensable qualification. From them the magistrates and other executive officers were chosen. The citizens who were not of the rank of decurions went under the name of plebeians. Besides these two classes, were the slaves. Of these every citizen possessed a certain number according to his means. Some gained a living by letting out for hire slaves who were proficient in any art or trade. In almost every considerable town were incorporated guilds or companies of trade, remains of which survive in London, Bristol, and other ancient cities.

The main purpose of the institutions of the Romans was doubtless the maintenance of their power. It centered in themselves ; but they were sagacious enough to

perceive that it was by improving the usages and condition of the people that their dominion would be strengthened and perpetuated. The fine roads they constructed answered the twofold purposes of a great popular convenience, and of laying the foundation of empire by laying open the interior to the military. Traces of these monumental works are found in all parts of the country ; some of the principal radiated from the central part of London ; remains of one were found eighteen feet below the surface by Sir C. Wren, in laying the foundation of St. Mary-le-Bow, in Cheapside. Roads, camps, and military stations constituted their principal works ; in civil architecture few traces survive, further than of arches, towers, and baths ; temples they erected on choice sites to their favourite deities, and upon which now stand our most celebrated cathedrals and collegiate churches. Revenue and recruits for the armies were the treasures most eagerly sought from conquest ; but the valuable fisheries and mineral wealth of Britain enabled her to add to the luxuries of the empire. Our pearls, jetstone, and oysters were highly prized ; and Pliny mentions a sort of British geese, of the smaller kind, as being a great delicacy. The tin, copper, and lead of the island were in high repute at Rome : some pigs of the latter metal, with the imperial mark upon them, may be seen in the British Museum.

During the long occupation of the island by the Romans the inhabitants must have been brought up nearly to their own standard of civilisation. The chief drawback from the advantages derived from them consisted in the loss by the natives, under the control and management of their masters, of those self-dependent energies which were indispensable to their defence when abandoned to their own resources. It was this effeminacy that doubt-

less contributed to the next and nearly equally protracted subjugation of the island by the Saxons.

These invaders were eminently warlike, but rough and uncouth as any of the barbarian nations that had overthrown the Roman empire. In their own country the Saxons had long been known to the Romans, and had maintained friendly or hostile relations with them ; but of the superior civilisation of the Romans they had not profited further than to learn the use of steel blades and other destructive weapons of war. In religion they were Pagans, professing the rites of a bloody faith, that made them hate or despise the Christians of Britain. In relation to the Romanised Britons they were more in a condition to receive than to give instruction. At best the Saxons had only reached the barbarous state ; and the institutions that grew up under their auspices discover few signs of superior intelligence, and are only analogous to the first attempts of all communities entering on the early stages of civilisation. Like other German tribes they respected the Roman institutions for the government of towns, but in other matters the Anglo-Saxon polity was crude and defective, as will be manifest from a few general characteristics.

The leading tests of the standard of civilisation are, 1. the political government of a people ; 2. their institutions for the security of person and property ; 3. civil equality of condition ; 4. religion and ecclesiastical establishment ; 5. and last, progress in science and useful arts. In adverting to these it must be borne in mind that we are considering less the Saxon institutions than the Anglo-Saxon state of society ; that state to which the country had arrived after it had been long possessed by the invaders up to the eve of the Conquest.

Some of the Anglo-Saxon princes were men of supe-

rior legislative minds, as Alfred and Edward the Confessor. The natural fierceness of the Saxon character was softened by Christianity, and the adoption of a portion, at least, of the civilised arts of Roman Britain. Like the Tartars in the subjugation of China, the Saxons found it more eligible to conform to the institutions of the vanquished than to force upon their adoption their own barbarisms. But the results of all combined failed to produce a very enviable condition of society.

One of the chief ends of social order is security; but neither person nor property was safe under the Anglo-Saxons. From the absence of police, assassinations and robberies were frequent, and whole towns or districts were often plundered or subjected to contribution by confederated bands of persons of condition. The chief criminals indeed of this age generally belonged to the higher classes; the masses were too much humbled and oppressed to prevent the robber's vocation. The punishments and commutations for offences were strangely repugnant to present notions,—remarkable either for cruelty or for unfairness. For example, the horrible torture of burning out the eyes was not only inflicted for offences, but merely to incapacitate a rival. Although theft was severely punished, yet the taking away life might be commuted for a penalty varying with the rank of the offender. The murder of a king, in common with a churl, had a fixed pecuniary atonement. Even the value of oaths varied with rank; thus the oath of a twelve-hind man was held equivalent to the oaths of six churls. Beside the *were*, as criminal penalties were called, there was also the *mund*, or security for the house, which varied with the condition of the party.

Such civil inequalities evince neither wisdom nor justice. Add to which the bondage of the mass of the com-

munity. Two-thirds of the people, as before remarked, were either the absolute slaves or in an intermediate state of servitude to the remaining third, and might be branded or whipped at the owner's discretion.

Alfred has been greatly extolled as a legislator ; but the code of laws ascribed to him were little more than a transcript of the Decalogue, and of the other provisions of the Mosaic dispensation.

For political government there does not appear to have been any fixed constitution. Even the succession to the crown was not regulated by an immutable principle, either of elective or hereditary right. The constitution of the great council of the nation, or *Witenagemot*, is not exactly known : it was not a representative body, but chiefly consisted of Thanes, who held lands immediately of the crown, and who could command the services of their military vassals. It was necessary that the king should obtain the assent of these to legislative enactments, because, without their acquiescence and support, it was impossible to carry them into execution.

One advantage resulting from the Saxon invasion deserves to be noted. The first inhabitants of Britain, as of France, Spain, and Italy, were Celts. The leading characteristics of this branch of the Caucasian variety of mankind are that their frames are athletic, spare, and wiry ; their foreheads narrow, the head itself elongated, the nose and mouth large, and the cheek-bones high ; altogether, their features are rather harsh. In disposition they are hot and fiery, but fickle ; intellectually, they are acute and ingenious in the highest degree. Descendants of the Celts still occupy in different proportions the countries they first inhabited. The present population of France partakes largely of the Celtic blood, and hence their proverbial vivacity, quickness, impulsive bravery,

and inconstancy of character. Ireland is chiefly Celtic, but Britain has retained comparatively slight traces of her first population. A branch of the Germans had visited the island even before the Romans, and after the latter came Dane, Saxon and, Norman, in such numbers that the pure aboriginal stock was chiefly left in the highlands of Scotland and in Wales. From this commingling the existing British nation is derived. The quick but evanescent endowments of the Celt have been strengthened by the greater breadth and stability of the Germanic infusions. Possessing exclusively neither the levity of the one nor the heaviness of the other, the result has been a national stamina unequalled for physical force, intellect, energy, enterprise, and perseverance.

All the misfortunes of the island, from the earliest period, seem to have left some benefit. The admixture of races, and successive conquests never wholly arrested the progress of improvement. An onward impulse was given in some direction, either moral or material, under every vicissitude of national fortune. After the misery of transition was over the country reaped advantages from each of its three subjugations. The Romans were generous masters; their object was dominion; that achieved, they compensated the vanquished by protection, and instructing them in their laws and institutions. The Saxons were essentially barbarous; but they brought along with them those notions of equal rights which they held in common with all German nations. Except, however, in laying the foundation of popular institutions, and renewing that physical energy of the population which had been partly lost under the fostering sway of the Romans, no other marked advantages can be traced to this class of invaders. Illiterate themselves, they not only undervalued but destroyed the learning planted by their predecessors.

During their long ascendancy, the country hardly knew an interval of repose and of settled government ; the only exception is the quarter of a century forming the reign of Edward the Confessor ; all the rest was one long disorderly period of strife, waste, turbulence—of wars waged with the previous inhabitants, or with foreigners seeking to dispossess the new occupants, or of contests sometimes between one petty state and another, and sometimes between adverse factions of the same state. The private vices of the Saxons were those of half-savage men. Superstitious, slothful, sensual, addicted to gluttony and drunkenness, without taste or refinement, mean and wretched in their attire, and their dwellings void of comfort : such are the peculiarities attributed by most writers to their moral and domestic economy.

Amidst such distractions and debasing influences, it is not surprising that the national character declined, and no advances were made in any line of public prosperity or greatness. Accordingly, at the era of the Norman invasion, England had acquired no marked position among European nations. In civilisation, the Normans were superior to the Saxons, and in this respect their coming was an advantage. They introduced into the country not only a higher learning but improved modes of life. They set an example of elegance and magnificence, to which the Saxons were strangers, in their festivities, in their apparel, and in their whole expenditure. Instead of wasting the most of their wealth in eating and drinking, their pride was to devote a great part of it to works of permanent utility or embellishment, to the building of castles, churches, and monasteries. The art of architecture in England may be said to have taken its rise from them. By them, also, it is probable that the agriculture of the country was improved, and its com-

merce extended. These eventual benefits were certainly purchased by a heavy immediate sacrifice, chiefly, however, at the expense of those classes who had made so profitless an use of their power. Conquests are sometimes a mere change of the ruling dynasty; but the Norman invasion transferred to new masters, together with the dominion of the country, its soil, and inhabitants. The proprietary changed as well as the government; and the Saxon aristocracy were at once dispossessed of political rule and their territorial property. It is the last decided example of the subjugation of one European state by another, and was productive of the important result of firmly consolidating England into one kingdom, having one head, one law, one language, and one supreme legislature.

Before concluding the *Ante-Norman* period, a short notice is due to the more remarkable Antiquities of the island pertaining to it. Of the passage of the Romans many traces survive in their coins, roads, stations, baths, and pavements, and in the three famous walls or ramparts successively erected or repaired by Agricola, Hadrian, and Severus, to inhibit the incursions of the Scots and Picts. But these remains are familiar from many descriptions, and a repetition of them does not pertain to these preliminary outlines. Traces of the ancient Britons are far more scanty than those of their Roman masters. Being without literature, and with a very limited knowledge of the useful arts, they were destitute of the means for transmitting any historical monuments of their existence, so that hardly a single reliable aboriginal vestige has come down to us; from this description Stonehenge and the Round Towers have by some been considered exceptional, but more careful and recent inquiries appear to have entirely divested these singular structures of the

past, of the extreme antiquity commonly ascribed to them.

The marvellous mostly becomes less or disappears as it is more closely scrutinised. Stonehenge has commonly been considered the colossal remains of a Druid temple. But the reasons that have been urged against so remote and improbable an origin seem unanswerable. The workmanship of the architraves which crown the columnar masses could only have been effected by the use of iron tools, and iron was only made available in Britain a little before the invasion of Julius Cæsar. Mr. Hebert dates the origin of Stonehenge, as not earlier than the fifth century A.D., and for which he adduces the very plausible reason, that neither Stonehenge nor the large barrow that existed at Avebury has been once mentioned by the Romans, though Avebury is within a few yards of their own Bath road; and that both should be passed unnoticed by them during their long occupation of Britain seems hardly accountable, except by the explanation that neither in their time existed.

The famed Round Towers still subsisting in Scotland and Ireland appear to belong to a corresponding or more recent era. According to Mr. Petrie, the period during which the towers were erected extended from the fifth to the thirteenth century of the Christian era; the majority of them were erected in the ninth and tenth centuries, and some as recently as the twelfth. These conclusions are fully established from a careful identification of their architectural characteristics with those of ecclesiastical edifices, known to have been built within these assigned terms. That the towers were built subsequent to the introduction of Christianity is proved by the fact that prior to this period the Irish were unacquainted with lime-cement and the construction of the arch. They

possess many remains of buildings of older date, but in none of them has there been found any trace of an arch or of lime-cement, both which are found in the structure of the towers. In style of architecture the towers correspond with that of the churches with which they appear to have been locally connected, though separated from them. On several of the towers Christian emblems are observable, and others exhibit those details universally admitted to belong to Christian times.

As to the original uses of the Round Towers, they seem to have been intended for the double purpose of belfries and of castles; the first as steeples for summoning the people to prayers and religious rites; and the second as ecclesiastical fortresses for the safe custody of relics and old church treasures against the predaceous violence peculiar to their era. In proof of these conclusions of Mr. Petrie, that they constituted the belfries of adjoining churches, I will add the facts which he appears to have overlooked, namely, that the belfries of Venice and in Russia at this day are all built and stand apart from the churches to which they belong. For the severance of the two, and the towers surviving the churches to which they were appendant, the obvious explanation may be found in the different durability of their materials. Even in England nearly up to the Conquest the walls of churches and of many cathedrals were of wood; but for the more conservative uses to which the round towers were consecrated there were manifest utilities in building them of a less perishable material.

CHAPTER II

THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

I. OBJECT OF THE INVASION.—*Territorial Partition of the Kingdom.*—*Utilities and Drawbacks of the Feudal System.*—*Institution of Chivalry.*—*Bondage of the People.*—*Hospitality of the Age.*—*Recent Example of Feudalism.*—II. PROGRESS OF LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS.—*Descent of Lands.*—*Establishment of the Curia Regia.*—*Origin of the Houses of Parliament.*—*Rise of Juries.*—III. LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.—*Popular Songs.*—*Obstacles to Progress.*—*Roger Bacon.*—*Historical Monuments.*—*Roll of Battle Abbey, Bayeux Tapestry, and Domesday Book.*

“WE shall still have to fight for grass,” observed a Kaffir chief, on learning the stinted boundaries that had been prescribed to his tribe by an English governor of South Africa. Cattle, grass, and water, in the early times of the past formed the common incentives to conterminous warfare. They constituted almost the sole wealth and subsistence of communities; consequently the possession of them were the most frequent objects of jealousy and strife. Beyond these primitive necessities of the pastoral age, doubtless both England and Normandy had in the eleventh century made considerable advances; still they continued, in the main, the chief source and brief expression of national riches and cupidity. It was the possession of the land that the Normans coveted in the invasion of England, and their ducal chief, it is probable, sought only to give a colour of right to his predaceous enterprise by a pretended testamentary bequest to him of the English sceptre by

Edward the Confessor. Harold, his Anglo-Saxon rival, was the elected sovereign of the nation, or at least the elected sovereign of the nobility and clergy, by whom the nation was represented; and this was the title by which many of his predecessors had reigned.

However, the spirit in which the Norman invasion was conceived, and its objects, were significantly embodied and set forth by the conqueror in his address to his army before the battle of Hastings. Just before his marshalled host advanced against Harold, he energetically told his followers: " Make up your minds to fight valiantly, and slay your enemies. A great booty is before us, for if we conquer we shall all be rich; what I gain you will gain; if I take the land you will have it in lots among you." A very stimulating exhortation, it must be confessed. A noble guerdon for their valour in the broad acres of this fair island. But the conquest proved a most arduous undertaking. Posterity have no reason to blush at the stand made by their ancestors, who proved themselves no recreant or abject warriors. They fought right manfully at Hastings, and long refused to bend to the yoke of the invaders. William was a brave, shrewd, and resolute leader, but it was only after a bloody struggle of seven years that he became the undisputed master of England. The Saxons often rebelled, and it was not till their principal chiefs had been slain or exiled, and some of the richest districts of the country made desolate, that the Norman dynasty was established.

The political and social changes subsequent to the subjugation of England were of a momentous character. First, as to the proprietorship of land. Modern wars have very different results from those of a semi-barbarous age. If princes fight now, it seldom involves more than the expenditure of taxes, or commercial interests, or

perhaps the royal succession. Private property is invariably respected. But the stakes involved in the warlike issues of former times were more comprehensive. In contending for the ownership of the soil was included the entire wealth of a kingdom, all its real property, industry, and people. This was the dazzling bribe the Norman offered to his confederates, and with which he rewarded them. A new race of paramount landlords was introduced; the land and its former possessors and cultivators changed masters. There were, however, exceptions to this general confiscation; those of the native proprietors who had not borne arms against the Conqueror, or promptly sent in their adhesion, were spared, and allowed to retain their possessions, subject to the feudal superiority of a Norman lord. It was the last and greatest proprietary revolution that has happened in any European state. During the convulsions in France there were extensive seizures of crown, church, and emigrant property, but it was not transferred to foreigners; moreover it was only the sequestration of the possessions of certain classes, not of an entire community.

In the division of the kingdom, the Conqueror, as might be expected, obtained the lion's share. He became the richest prince in Europe. Besides abundance of farms and lands in Middlesex and other counties, he was lord of 1422 manors. The rest of the country, with few exceptions, was divided into baronies, and these baronies were again let out to vassals, who held the same relation of dependence to their lord, that the lord did to the sovereign. The whole country contained 400 barons or chief tenants, and 60,215 knights' fees, or conscriptive territorial allotments, each bound to contribute one soldier armed and mounted. They formed the feudal militia for the defence of the kingdom, and were embodied

annually forty days, or other fixed period. The conquered natives were not eligible to the rank of barons, only into the secondary class, into which they were glad to be admitted; it was in this way that the allodial or free lands which escaped the confiscation of the Conquest were converted into tenures, the owner preferring to an insecure and irksome individual freedom the protection of a Norman lord.

From this description it is easy to conceive the condition of the kingdom. It was divided into 700 petty sovereignties, subordinate to the duke of Normandy, who was himself a vassal of the king of France. It was the feudal system in one of its advanced stages. It had not been introduced by the Normans, but had existed, though less efficiently, under the Anglo-Saxons. Many centuries before, it had been introduced into almost every country in Europe by its new masters. Under the circumstances it appears to have been a necessary, conservative, and not inequitable social arrangement. A new country had been conquered; it had next to be divided, cultivated, and governed. How could these exigencies be best attained? The chief or prince reserves to himself a portion of the territory, allots the remainder among his followers according to their rank and deserts, and these again subdivide their portions among their immediate dependents. But this division was not made without conditions. A mutual and identical contract binds all. A condition of service is annexed. Between the prince and his barons the condition is, that they shall aid him in war and peace for the common defence and benefit, and a like obligation binds the vassal to his lord. In this polity the king was only head baron, and his kingdom itself a barony; he might make war, levy troops, punish or pardon offences, and coin money; all which

acts of sovereignty the barons might exercise in their respective domains.

“If we look,” says Mr. Hallam, “at the feudal polity as a scheme of civil freedom, it bears a noble countenance. To the feudal law it is owing that the very names of right and freedom were not swept away, as in Asia, by the desolating hand of power.”*

The more we reflect the more deeply impressed we become with the fitness of the feudal system to the age and urgencies of the period of its introduction. The subversion of the Roman Empire of the West had left European society a chaos, and it had to be reconstructed. All the ties which bind men together were loosened or subverted by the irruption of the barbarians. Property was without owners, the laws without reverence, and authority without respect. For the introduction of order into this confusion feudalism at once presented the requisite guarantees. By establishing the relation of vassal and superior one of the first elements of society was introduced, — that of subordination of ranks. The apportionment of the land was the institution of property, and the allotment of its fruits consecrated the rights of industry. No one’s rights, however, were absolute ; they were correlative, mutually conditional ; and the universal condition, the basis of all ownership, enjoyment, or reward, was service — service to the prince, service to the baron, or service to his vassal. This was the beginning or primordial element, and was certainly a just one ; it was Labour in return for property, produce, or honour.

Although so apt for its purpose, and in the main of generous and useful attributes, feudalism has never been so lofty

* Europe in the Middle Ages, edit. 10., vol. i. p. 269.

in its pretensions as to claim for itself the sanctities of a divine institution. It had neither a Moses, a Mahomet, nor a Confucius for its founder. It was a scheme of partially civilised men, intended for the security of their conquests, the administration of justice and political government; for the division of land, its cultivation, and the allocation of its inhabitants and produce. That it succeeded so well evinces a natural disposition in man, unaided by higher sanctions, to contrive social remedies for the social maladies that environ him. European society, without the organisation of the feudal tenures, would have been no better than an army without officers or discipline, or a community of settlers transported to Australia without governors, laws, or territorial rights.

It must not be concluded that feudalism was perfect on its first introduction. It had been in progress of development on the Continent for seven or eight centuries previous to the Conquest. The fiefs, or grants of land on condition of service, appear to have been first made for the life of the grantee. By a transition natural to human nature, the life-interest滑 into a perpetuity; but though hereditary succession was allowed, absolute ownership was never recognised; and the son, on succeeding his father in the inheritance, was obliged to pay an acknowledgment to his superior called a relief. He must also take the oath of fealty or allegiance, and do homage. Traces of both survive. In doing homage for lands, the vassal, ungirding his sword and uncovering his head, knelt before his lord, and, holding up his clasped hands, solemnly declared to him that from that day forth he became his man (*homme*, whence the word homage), to serve him with life and limb, and earthly honour. The ceremony generally ended by his kissing the lord's cheek, which salute the lord returned. A rem-

nant of this is retained in the coronation : the peers, all kneeling before the king, uncovered, and then kissing his cheek,—symbols of affection, obedience, mutual faith, and protection.

Besides establishing order and political government, other benefits were conferred. The rights of property and industry ascertained, society was prepared for a further advance in civilisation by the melioration of social amenities. To this the introduction of Chivalry preeminently contributed. It was an incident of feudalism, and tended to the refinement of manners, to introduce grace, courtesy, and honour. The barons were the salt of the earth. Preeminent in rank, as the land-owners, legislators, and judges, it was meet they should also be distinguished from the commonalty by elevation of sentiment and behaviour. Hence the establishment in Europe, between the age of Charlemagne and that of the Crusades, of the order of Knighthood. It was an institution of honour and of moral example, not of property, function, or jurisdiction. A character without reproach and a honourable descent were indispensable ; though a valiant plebeian was sometimes enriched and knighted. The honour was coveted by the highest, even princes, and could only be conferred by one who had acquired the distinction. The ceremony of making a Knight was at first simple ; after some previous trial the candidate was invested with sword and spurs, and his shoulder touched with a slight blow, intimative of the last affront he ought to endure. He swore to defend the fair sex, to speak the truth, to maintain the right, to succour the distressed, to practise courtesy (a virtue much needed in these times), to combat the infidels, to despise the allurements of ease and safety, and to vindicate in every perilous adventure the honour of his

character. These engagements were all laudable, noble, humane, and generous. Traces of them have never been wholly obliterated; and to the institution of Chivalry society is unquestionably indebted for some of its most gracious and elevating distinctions. It was auxiliary both to plebeian and patrician morals, and aided the deficiencies of religious teaching. Observing on a word native to the West, Dean Milman remarks that, "*Courtesy* designates a new virtue, not ordained by our religion." "The age of chivalry," he continues, "may be gone, but the influences of chivalry, it may be hoped, mingled with and softened by purer religion, will be the imperishable heirloom of social man."

Under what aspect, then, ought the feudal age to be viewed? Was it an enviable one? From the present it was wholly dissimilar. Of this the characteristics are isolation, personal independence, and absence of superiority. Of the past, a universal connexion, a chain of subordination that bound all, was the leading feature. No one stood single, or was left to his own resources. All were cared for, or had objects of care. Nearly all were masters, but no one was free. The highest links were the least controlled. The baron was a prince, his castle a palace, his domain a kingdom, his vassals and retainers were his lieges. Sometimes his influence was salutary, sometimes pernicious. If he controlled the monarch, he enfeebled the monarchy. There could be no nation under the feudal system; only a federation of states. Feudalism was better than anarchy or the total absence of law and government; but as a permanent social polity it was decidedly objectionable. First, it was an institution of castes, irrespective of desert or utility, leaving little scope for the expansion of society, either in its moral or material elements. Secondly, it operated perniciously in rendering

honour, function, and property hereditary, and accumulative in the privileged classes. Thirdly, it was a system of monopoly, and of civil inequality to the excluded and degraded orders. Fourthly, it was a power without responsibility, therefore tyranny, and liable to be tyrannically exercised.

The last was among the causes of the decline of feudalism. It had rendered good service at the commencement, in laying the foundations of European society amidst the storms and confusion which followed the dissolution of the Roman empire. But there its mission ended. It could not be permanent. Absolute power inevitably tends to involve in a common ruin its possessor and victim. The haughty barons were corrupted by it. Amenable to no law, tribunal, or authority, without intellectual culture or resources, they were the slaves of their passions, and almost without any object of pursuit or ambition save rapine, violence, and commotion. One of the memorable enterprises to which ignorant fanaticism made them a prey was the Crusades for the recovery of the Holy Land from the infidels; but even this extravagant enterprise was not so impoverishing and ruinous to them as their private wars. Aided by their vassals and mercenary dependents, hostilities were carried on against each other with the utmost fury. During these conflicts the condition of the people was deplorable; no security for person or property. The baronial castles were so many dens of robbers, whence the occupiers sallied forth, day and night, to commit spoil on the open country, the villages, and even the towns. Torture was frequently resorted to by the lordly brigands to extort from the people the produce of their industry. "Some," says the Saxon Chronicle, "they hanged up by the feet and smoked with foul smoke; some by the thumbs or the beard, and hung coats

of mail on their feet. They put them into dungeons, with adders, and snakes, and toads. Many thousands they wore out with hunger." These disorders were at their height in the reign of Stephen, in which there was neither justice nor humanity; and the natural result of such wild confusion was the cessation of the arts of industry; the land was left untilled, and a grievous famine ensued, which reduced the spoiler and the spoiled to extreme destitution.

A prominent feature of this age was the bondage of the mass of the people. However repulsive personal slavery may be, its introduction was a step in civilisation, and originated in humane motives. The ancient practice of warfare was to destroy all the prisoners taken; and it was only after the lapse of time that the more merciful mode was adopted of reducing them to slavery. A second advance was, not only to save the lives of prisoners, but to cease to make bondmen of them. This last has been a triumph of modern civilisation, and did not obtain generally among the nations of antiquity. Personal servitude, indeed, as Mr. Hallam remarks, up to a comparatively recent period, has been the lot of a large, perhaps the greater, portion of mankind.

Great as was the Norman revolution, it did not effect any change in the condition of the masses. Their services were as necessary to the new as to the old masters; and as the terms on which these had been exacted could hardly be made more onerous, they continued without alteration. Except, too, by enforcing with greater strictness the feudal relations, the better to maintain the ascendancy of the invaders, no changes were made in the chain of subordination and dependence which that system had previously introduced. So that, for a long time after the Conquest, the Saxon subdivisions of society were maintained, and

the inhabitants of England continued divided into the two great classes of freemen and slaves. Except the baronial proprietors of land and their vassals, the rest of the nation was depressed in servitude, which, though qualified as to its effects, was uniform in this principle—that none who had been born in, or had fallen into bondage, could acquire an absolute right to any species of property.

The mitigation and final extinction of slavery was the slow and gradual work of time. A law of William I., by which a residence of twelve months in a town or castle made a freedman, lessened the number of serfs. The spread of Christianity, by teaching mankind that they were equal, early awakened men to the injustice of a practice which made one man the property of another. “The people of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Bedford,” says Froissart, “began to stir, because they were kept in great bondage; and in the beginning of the world, they said, there were no bondsmen.”

“ When Adam delv’d and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman ?”

was the significant inquiry of John Ball. Frequently, at the intercession of their confessors, the feudal lords were induced to enfranchise their slaves; and from the ignorance of the times, the administration of justice devolving into the hands of the clergy, opportunities occurred of showing particular indulgence to this unfortunate class of society. In the eleventh century the pope formally issued a bull for the emancipation of slaves; and in 1102, in the great council of the nation, held at Westminster, it was declared unlawful for any man to *sell slaves openly in the market*, which before had been the common custom of the country.

It would, however, be a mistake to infer from this that

slavery ceased in the land, or that men did not long after continue a vendible article. In both *Magna Charta* and the charters of Henry III., obtained in 1225, a class of men are mentioned who appear to have been treated as chattel property. The prohibition to guardians from *wasting* the *men* or cattle on the estates of minors is a clear proof that villeins who held by servile tenures were looked upon in the light of negroes on a cotton or sugar plantation. Long after this period they were considered a saleable commodity, of which Sir F. Eden cites several instances from ancient authorities. In 1283 a slave and his family were sold by the Abbot of Dunstable for 13*s.* 4*d.*; in 1333 a lord granted to a chantry several messuages, together with the bodies of eight natives dwelling there, with all their chattels and offspring; and in 1339 there is an instance of a gift of a *nief* (female slave), with all her family and all that she possessed or might subsequently acquire. It was not for several centuries that slavery was totally abolished in England. An attempt made to extinguish it in 1526 failed. Even Cromwell did not scruple to send the Scottish prisoners, taken at Dunbar in 1650, to the West Indian colonies as slaves. It was at length abolished by statute in the reign of Charles II.

Having adverted to the leading results of the Conquest and of the characteristics of Feudalism, one other peculiarity of the age may be shortly noticed. Hospitality is one of the common and boasted distinctions of semi-barbarism, but, it may be added, an unavoidable one. From there being no costly articles of equipage or dress, no concerts, operas, or paintings, for which the surplus produce of the soil beyond the lord's immediate wants could be exchanged, he was naturally led to spend it in riotous entertainments and rustic feasting; in the support of vast numbers of retainers and idle dependents. In this way the household expenses

of Thomas Earl of Lancaster amounted in 1313 to 120,000*l.* of present money. Thus our kings were wont to live more in the style of a Tartar chief than a modern prince. According to Stow, Richard II. ordinarily fed at table 10,000 people. The castles of the great were always open to strangers of condition, as well as to their own vassals. One cannot help feeling some curiosity as to the kind of viands of which the vast entertainments given by kings and nobles mainly consisted. As the refinements of the table are of comparatively modern date, it may be reasonably inferred that the materials of the feast were more remarkable for quantity than quality. Indeed, it is known that many articles were formerly consumed, as cranes, heronshaws, porpoises, and seals, that now seldom appear on the tables of the great.

Towards the close of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century, the ancient hospitality began to give way to more refined luxury; and some of the barons, instead of dining in the great hall with a crowd of dependents, dined sometimes in a private parlour, with their families and select friends — a deviation from old customs very unpopular, and subjecting them to much reproach. Commerce, too, had begun to offer to the rich allurements of a different kind, which induced them, from motives of personal gratification, to lessen the number of idle dependents, and to grant a portion of their demesnes to tenants, on condition of receiving rents that might enable them to extend their pursuits beyond gorgeous entertainments, field-sports, or domestic warfare. In this way, the progress of manufactures led to a salutary revolution in the manners of the great landowners, and through them to the subordinate ranks of the community. In lieu of squandering immense revenues in the support of numerous followers, they were expended in the

purchase of the productions of art. For a pair of diamond buckles, or something as frivolous, Dr. Smith remarks, they exchanged the maintenance of a thousand men for a year, and with it the whole weight and authority which it could give them.

By this exchange of elegant luxury for rude profusion social happiness was doubtless augmented. The feudal age was coarse and insecure, and failed in all the comforts and accommodations of existing life. Of this we have undoubted evidence down to a recent period. The celebrated Simon Lord Lovat up to the year 1740 lived in the style of a Norman baron of the 14th century. Ferguson, the astronomer, who long lived with this old laird, says his residence "was a sort of tower, forming at best such a house as would be deemed an indifferent one for an English squire. It had in all only four rooms on a floor, and none of them large. There, however, he kept a sort of court with several public tables, and had a very numerous body of retainers always in attendance. His own constant residence, and the place where he received company and dined with them, was in one room only, and that the very room in which he lodged. His lady's sole apartment was also her bedchamber. The only provision made for lodging all the domestic servants or the numerous retainers was a quantity of straw, which was spread every night over the lower rooms, where the whole of the inferior part of the family, consisting of a very great number of persons, took up their abode. Sometimes above 400 persons attending this petty court were kennelled there."

Of course there was feudalism on a larger and more magnificent scale than that kept up at Castle Dunie; but the general provision was of similar quality, and the standard of comfort and enjoyment not greatly superior.

II. PROGRESS OF LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS.

The character of the laws of a community forms an important element in the progress of civilisation. In society the great ends of legal contrivance are the maintenance of institutions for the common benefit; the security of persons and property, with no greater infringement of natural rights than is essential to procure equal liberty and enjoyment by all. The advances made towards the attainment of these social guarantees in the period immediately before and after the Conquest will be the object of inquiry in the present section.

Our laws may be traced to three principal sources—Roman, Teutonic, and Judaic. In legislation, I apprehend, we are not so deeply indebted as sometimes conjectured to the ancient Germans. It is hardly possible, however, to talk about the forests and dark rolling rivers of Germany without feeling something of the inspiration of poetry, and hence may have arisen a tendency to exaggerated descriptions. A spirit of liberty and equality, and an energy to maintain them, may be fairly traced to a Teutonic source; but of positive institutions few remains survive, except perhaps the practice of commuting for offences by a pecuniary penalty; and, secondly, till lately, trial by battle or single combat. Both these are of Gothic origin. The loss of an eye or tooth, or any other personal injury, even to life itself, might be atoned for by the payment of money to the injured party or his surviving relations. This was a barbarous usage, and affords a striking contrast to the present institutes. In the jurisprudence of the Anglo-Saxons life was taken for theft to a trifling amount, but spared for any degree of violence; evincing, contrary to

what might have been expected, the greater importance attached to the security of property than of persons.

The modern duel seems of German paternity. It was the natural resource of armed and revengeful men, who were wont to refer claims of right and justice to the tests of courage and superior physical strength. The tribes of the Rhine and the Danube had few civilians among them except the women; being all warriors armed to the teeth, a passage of arms presented itself as an obvious mode for the adjudication of wrongs.

Connected with the judicial combat, and sometimes improperly confounded with it in origin, was the ordeal, or trial by boiling water, or exposure to burning ploughshares. A superstitious feeling entered into all these references. It was an appeal to the justice of Heaven, under the impression that God would defend the right; and hence, if the sword point did not hurt, the hot water did not scald, or the fire did not burn, the accused was declared innocent. This ordeal appears to have been derived from the Mosaic dispensation, and founded on the water of jealousy mentioned in Numbers. After the introduction of Christianity the Bible became the model code of legislation; in accordance with this authority Alfred framed his principal laws, and from the same source the institution of tithes was derived.

It is, however, neither to Jews nor Germans that we are mainly indebted for our legal institutes. The Romans were the first masters of Europe, and everywhere left traces of their ascendancy. With the barbarians on the confines of the empire, whom they did not care to subdue, they frequently concluded treaties rendering them allies, and enlightening and benefiting them by friendly intercourse. Hence, the Saxons on their arrival in this country, as before noticed, were familiar with Roman

models, and respected their authority. The laws they found established they suffered to continue; they were not abrogated by the Normans, and have descended, in their leading types, to the present generation. The predominance of the Roman spirit in our juridical usages will be obvious from a few examples.

The Roman forms of testamentary disposition were the same as our own, till some recent alterations. Wills were made by signing, witnessing, and sealing. They might be either written or verbal, a distinction only abolished by the late statute. A death-bed gift, made by a person in danger, on condition of being restored, if the party recovered, was a Roman custom; so was a suit *in forma pauperis*. The Romans supported their highways by tolls; they had laws for the regulation of carriers, the size of wagons, the breadth of wheels, and the number of mules in a team. Their game laws were severe; but ferocious animals alone were game, not wild-fowl, rabbits, and animals of that description. An English judge cannot exercise his function in his native county; neither could a Roman. Our marriage rites may be traced to the Romans; bridesmaids were chosen; there was the wedding ring; presents were made by the friends of the affianced; and the nuptials were not solemnised without first consulting the fortune-tellers. It was considered a civil contract, the essence of which consisted in the mutual consent of the parties. It was not till the ninth century the emperor Leo VI. declared ecclesiastical benediction to be essential to marriage. Marriage has again become a civil contract, which may, at the option of the parties, be concluded without religious solemnities.

Roman usages survived every vicissitude of dominion. The Normans respected the institutions which had been

respected by preceding invaders, and which they found had been long established and were popular with the nation. The people resisted innovations, and, whenever it was necessary to conciliate them, solemn promises were made to restore or confirm to them the old Roman and Anglo-Saxon institutes, embodied in the laws of Edward the Confessor. Important changes, however, followed the Conquest, which may be briefly enumerated.

First, in the new tenure of land, by which it was made subject to a military conscription of 60,000 cavalry for the defence of the kingdom ; or, in lieu of service, a fine or escuage was levied for each knight's fee. The condition of vassals was improved ; their services, which under their Anglo-Saxon lords had been indefinite and variable, were rendered certain, according to the Norman fashion. Some vicissitudes in the law of descent are remarkable. Under William I. the law of partibility prevailed, and the children divided the estate of their ancestor in equal shares. This had been the custom under the Anglo-Saxons, but soon after the Conquest the Normans, probably for the greater security of their estates, introduced the consolidating system. The first notice of primogeniture is in the laws of Henry I., where it is declared that the eldest son shall take the principal fief ; but the rest of the inheritance was divided between the sons in equal portions. In the time of Glanvil the eldest son inherited all the lands held by knight service, but the descent of socage lands held by services certain depended on the customs of the manor.* In the reign of Edward I. the same law of descent subsisted as now obtains. The custom of entails, however, is of older

* Hallam's History of the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 336.

standing; among the Anglo-Saxons any one might by deed entail an heritage so as to make it inalienable. Prior to 32 Henry VIII. there was a general testamentary power over freehold land; but the power of willing personal property seems to have existed from the earliest period. But this power only extended to one-third part of a man's personal effects, the remaining two-thirds being equally divided in two shares between the widow and children.*

One of the most important of the Norman revolutions in judicial polity was the establishment of the general jurisdiction of the king's justiciaries, who are now represented by the judges of the superior courts of Westminster. Under the Anglo-Saxons the *curia regia* took cognisance of controversies among the nobles, but under William I. the decision of causes was vested in a definite number of magnates, of whom one was chief, and acted as viceroy in the absence of the king. The superior rank of this tribunal gave great authority to its adjudications, and from it emanated many of those doctrines known as the Common Law of England.

Parliament had hardly manifested any distinguishable feature of its existing legislative functions. But the germ was always there, coeval with political government, and as old or older than the monarchy. Assemblies of the realm for the enactment of laws appear always to have formed an important part of the constitution of England; but during several ages the twofold functions of executive government and legislation appear to have centered in the same assembly. Such assemblies, in

* By the Wills Act (1 Vict. c. 26.) all property, real and personal, is made devisable. But in Scotland the law remains unchanged, and the right of bequest is restricted to personal effects.

different periods, obtained different appellations. Among the Britons they were called fahring, brat, or comhdach, among the Saxons folksmote and witenagemote, and under the Normans and their successors they assumed the Latin titles, concilium or curia, or were designated by the French term parlement. They were the elect of the community, deriving preeminence from age, wisdom, property, or other distinguishing attribute.

It was a natural and unavoidable institution. No chief or ruler, Briton, Saxon, or Norman, could long govern unaided by those possessed of influence, and who were almost his equals, as prelates or barons. They formed the national assembly or council, exercising, subordinate to the king, all the functions of state, and representing all the existing interests of the community. As new interests arose, new representatives of these interests were incorporated; prelates and abbots represented the ecclesiastical order, and knights, citizens, and burgesses the gentry, cities, and towns, — so that a national assembly, representing the existing property and intelligence, it is likely always formed an element of the general government. How this assembly came to be subdivided into the existing Houses of Lords and Commons, and the various modifications these have undergone in their mutual relations, constituency, and functions, opens a wide field of inquiry. All that can be here attempted is to define a few of the more distinctive features of parliamentary evolution.

In tracing the history of the House of Lords there is not much difficulty. From the Conquest it consisted of the great Norman barons and prelates who by grant of William I. obtained the possessions of the Saxon lords. These and their descendants met and sat in virtue of

territorial right, and are more especially described in the first great charter as the greater barons. To these barons by tenure were subsequently added a lesser order of barons created by royal writ; that is, notable men were summoned at the king's pleasure to aid him by their advice in parliament without any right antecedent to his selection. It was not, however, till the sixteenth century that when a man had been summoned and taken his seat in consequence he and his heirs became ennobled. To the practice of creating peers by writ was added in the reign of Richard II. that of creating them by letters patent under the great seal. These innovations have altered the original composition of the Upper House as derived exclusively from land, and identified it, in its representative capacity, with court favour, legal eminence, or commercial affluence.

The origin of the House of Commons dates from two centuries later; but, like the House of Lords, it had a distinct period of commencement, and gradually evolved into its existing form by successive modifications. It was in 1258 the first germ appeared, when the barons assembled at Oxford, to strengthen themselves against the king, and aid them in their efforts to expel foreign mercenaries from the kingdom, sought popular co-operation by permitting representatives of the counties to be present pending their deliberations. At the same period the word Parliament began to be commonly used. Six years later the basis of representation was widely extended, and the original of the House of Commons clearly defined by Simon de Montfort, the distinguished leader of the public cause. This parliament met at Winchester in 1264, and was summoned by Montfort in the king's name, and is shown by Dr. Brady to have been the first in which two knights for each county, two citizens for

each city, and two burgesses for each borough were summoned. Writs are still extant of the summoning of this parliament, and are the earliest known. But though commoners were thus summoned in the reign of Henry III. the duties they were permitted to exercise were of a very humble description. They had no deliberative capacity, nor hardly a negative, but simply the privilege of giving their assent to such grants of money as the king might demand. Their expenses were borne by the localities which sent them; and it was considered a disadvantage to be required to return deputies. Some constituencies were so poor, that they prayed to be excused sending representatives,—unable to pay their wages, four shillings per day for a knight, and two shillings for a burgess. Our early princes indeed appear to have entertained very disparaging notions of the constitutional importance of both Houses. There is reason to think that it was the intention of Edward I. to have confined the Lords to the office of giving their advice, and that of the Commons to presenting petitions, reserving to himself the sole power of making the laws. In the language of the time, laws were not enactments of parliament, but simply concessions by the crown on the petition of the subject. All new laws were introduced in the form of petitions to the king, and were either granted, denied, or delayed. Those petitions that were granted were afterwards put into the form of statutes by the clerks in Chancery, inserted in the statute roll, and transmitted to the sheriffs to be promulgated in the county courts. But these forms were not always punctually executed. Sometimes the petitions, though granted, were entirely laid aside; at other times they were formed into statutes, but not published, and often they were so altered in the transcription as not to reach the grievance for which they

had been obtained. As a remedy for this abuse, the Commons required that the more important of these petitions should be put into proper form and published during the sitting of parliament, in the presence of the king, and before the two Houses. They could then appeal to them as matters of record, and if they were not observed by the king's officers, they could inquire into the cause next session.

The power of the purse was the chief source of the power of the Commons. Acquiring the right to refuse their assent to supplies, previous to a grant of money they stipulated for the grant of their petitions. This was the instrument of all their subsequent triumphs, and of their emancipation from the thraldom of both the crown and aristocracy.

The opinion that the several estates ever sat and voted together does not appear to rest on adequate authority. The ancient practice on opening a parliament more nearly resembled the present than is generally represented. The chancellor unfolded to them in the Commons the subjects for their consideration, and then referred them to separate places to frame their answers. The year that has been assigned for their separation is 1339, when the Commons refused to grant the same aid as the Lords without instructions from their constituents ; but at that very time they deliberated separately, and had deliberated separately long before.

Two important judicial improvements pertain to this period that require notice. Next in utility to a faithful record of the statutes or acts of parliament was the commencement, under Edward I., of the Year Book, or annual report of the cases adjudged in the courts of law. A still more signal judicial advancement was the introduction of Trial by Jury. But the ancient constitution

of juries, as Sir Francis Palgrave has shown, was very different from the modern. Jurymen in the present day are triors of the issue; they are individuals who found their opinion upon the evidence adduced before them; and the verdict delivered by them is their declaration of the judgment which they have formed. But the ancient jurymen were impanelled to be examined as to the credibility of their evidence; the question was not discussed and argued before them; they, the jurymen, were the *witnesses themselves*, and the verdict was substantially the result of the examination of those witnesses, who of their own knowledge, and without the aid of other testimony, afforded their evidence respecting the facts in question to the best of their belief. Trial by jury, therefore, was only a trial by witnesses, not a trial of the accused by his equals; the jury only gave evidence of the fact, not a judgment on the truth or falsity of the accusation.

According to this mode Alice Perrers was tried in the reign of Richard II. The jury consisted of sixteen knights and esquires of the late king's household, who, from their situation, had been in the habit of witnessing the conduct of Perrers. The trial was before a committee of the House of Lords, and six of the jury were examined against the accused.*

Up to the reign of King John the superior courts of law pertained to the king's person, and accompanied him in his travels. But Magna Charta provided that the courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas should not be transitive, but stationary in Westminster. At a later period, in 1285, justices of assize were appointed to go two or three times every year for the more speedy administration of justice. As these justices were also the judges in the chief courts at Westminster, they made

* Lingard's History of England, vol. iv. p. 227.

their circuits into the country, as they do now, in the time of the vacations of their courts. A few years later the justices of assize were made justices of gaol delivery in all places in their circuits.

III. LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

The changes of oral and written language form expressive incidents of national progress. Language is the standard of refinement, and the successive mutations it undergoes, like the undulating line of sea-level in geology, form so many unmistakeable records by which an advancing or receding civilisation may be traced. As ideas multiply, so do words for the expression of them, and their adaptation to the purposes of verbal communication improves with the advances of society. Of our first, or mother tongue, the ancient British, almost every trace has been obliterated, having disappeared or been circumscribed with the aboriginal inhabitants. That now spoken is essentially a branch of the Teutonic, which is the foundation of the modern German, Danish, and Dutch. Having been introduced by the Saxons in the fifth century, it gradually spread, with the people who spoke it, over nearly the whole of England; the Celtic language, previously used, shrinking before it into Wales, Cornwall, and other remote districts of the island, as the Indian tongues have retired before the advance of Anglo-Saxon settlers in North America. But as a language commonly ceases with the people who speak it, and as the Saxons, ruthless as they were, did not wholly exterminate the Britons, it may be safely concluded, as previously elucidated (p. 8.), that a portion of their speech survived, and was incorporated with that of the invaders; perhaps a larger proportion than is sometimes represented.

The predominant ingredient, however, is unquestionably Saxon, as may be instanced in a few examples. Of sixty-nine words which make up the Lord's Prayer, there are only five not Saxon. Of eighty-one words in the soliloquy of Hamlet, thirteen only are of Latin origin. Even in a passage of ninety words of Milton, whose diction is more learned than that of any other poet, there are only sixteen Latin words. In seventy-nine words of Addison, whose correct taste preserved him from a pedantic or constrained preference for any portion of the language, we find only fifteen Latin. The proneness of Dr. Johnson to Latinity has been strongly censured, but in eighty-seven words of his fine parallel between Dryden and Pope he has found means to introduce not more than twenty-one of Latin derivation. The language of familiar intercourse and business, the turns of jests, our proverbial sentences and idiomatic phrases, all in short that constitutes the foundation of a living tongue and the efficient verbal agency of daily life, is Saxon. The short familiar words which we naturally incline to when under the influence of strong feeling, or desirous of conveying our sentiments with despatch, force, and simplicity, are in that language. Of its greater signification an example will suffice. "Well-being arises from well-doing" is a Saxon phrase, which may be thus rendered into the Latin part of the language: "Felicity attends virtue." In the Saxon phrase the roots or parts of words — the well, being, and doing — being significant in our language, and familiar to our eyes and ears, throw their whole meaning, with appropriate emphasis, into the compounds, while the Latin words of the same import, having their roots in a strange tongue, convey only a cold and conventional impression to the English perception.

The Anglo-Saxon is now only available to antiquaries.

The spelling and pronunciation are so different from the present English, that it is unintelligible to a modern, whether written or spoken. It was not the language of our early literature. The venerable Bede, Gildas, and other learned Saxons, wrote in Latin. The first Anglo-Saxon writer of note, who composed in his native tongue, and of whom there are any remains, is Cædmon, a monk of Whitby, who died about 680. Next in succession to him, but about two centuries later, is king Alfred. Actuated by a desire for the diffusion of useful knowledge among his people, this great prince translated into Anglo-Saxon the historical works of Bede, the Psalms of David, and perhaps *Æsop's Fables*. He was followed by Alfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, also a friend to popular education and a copious writer in the language of the people. One of our later and more valuable historical works, the "Saxon Chronicle," is compiled in the language of the time, and comprises a notice of the chief events of English history from Alfred to the reign of Henry II.

The Conquest produced a great, but not a radical change in the language. Norman-French, one of the modifications of Latin, which arose in the middle ages, was the language of the new government, and, as a consequence, became that of the law courts, of education, and the upper classes generally; while the Saxon shared the degradation which the people at large experienced under their conquerors. Though depressed, yet, as the speech of the great body of the nation, it could not be extinguished. Having numbers on its side, it maintained its ground as the substance of the popular language, the Norman infusing only one word for every three of the more vulgar tongue. It was not from foreign adoptions, but its own inherent tendencies, that the language underwent the great revolution remarked in the course of the twelfth century.

A spoken tongue is subject to constant vicissitudes. As a vehicle for the conveyance of thought, the natural tendency is to expedite and abbreviate its functions. Entire syllables are dropped, and the inflections and terminations of long words softened and compressed till they entirely disappear. It was the application of this usage of speech to the celebrated poems of Ossian that exposed the general forgery of their ingenious promulgator. Macpherson made his Fingal, Norma, and dark-eyed Duna speak in a language that they could not possibly understand in the age in which they lived. Oral tongues not only fluctuate from abbreviation, but from the influence of local circumstances, the operation of which it would be tedious to explain, though the results are visible in the diversity of dialects observable in every country. The great check in these innovations is an established literature; that is, written compositions generally accessible to the people, in which their language is stereotyped, affording them a standard of reference and corrective of the vulgarities of conversation. But there was no popular literature in this age. Ecclesiastics were the only writers, and almost the only readers. The Anglo-Saxon nobles and the Norman nobility for centuries despised book-learning, and, in truth, were unable to read had they been so disposed. The way in which the Conquest most essentially affected the language was in the invaders attempting to learn it, which was, doubtless, an easier task than to instruct the natives in their own; but, unable to acquire exactly the pronunciation, those variations in utterance may have arisen by which greater changes were effected by the Normans than by the introduction of new words. However this may be, it is certain that the original Anglo-Saxon had undergone so great a metamorphosis in the first half of the

thirteenth century, that it was more difficult to understand than the diction of Chaucer at present. These mutations were the foundation of the present English, or Normanised Anglo-Saxon.

But the distinction between the learned and unlearned, and the blending of Saxon, Danish, and Norman with the native British, long kept England a kind of Babel in language. For centuries after the Conquest a confusion of tongues prevailed, the different orders of the people speaking a different language. This was so much the case in the early part of the fourteenth century, that public speakers were sometimes obliged to pronounce the same discourse three times to the same audience ; once in Latin, once in French, and once in English. Latin was the language of the church, of schools, of courts of justice, and in general of the learned of all professions. All acts of parliament to A. D. 1266, and many of them long after, were in that language. It was not till 1258 that the Great Charter itself was translated into English, and read to the people in their mother-tongue. The Norman-French was the language of the court and people of fashion, Anglo-Saxon of the burgesses and common people. The last gradually acquired predominancy, and in 1352 it had so far forced its way into courts of justice, from which it had been excluded by William I., that the pleadings were by act of parliament ordered to be in English.

The earliest literary expression of the popular sentiment is likely to be embodied in the political songs of the people. The oldest song in English refers to the decisive battle of Lewes in 1264, when the barons entirely defeated the royal party. It is directed against the brother of Henry III., who had become unpopular from his foreign connexions, and who took shelter at a wind-

mill after witnessing the defeat of the king's party. Previously, all the songs that have been preserved, from the accession of King John, are in Latin, Anglo-Norman, or French. One song in the reign of Edward II. presents in alternate succession all the three languages which were then in use. It is a tirade on the times, the burden of which is the old cry of the oppression of the poor by the rich, and has been published by Mr. Wright in his Collection.* The oldest love-song Mr. Warton considers to belong to about the year 1200, and begins

“Blow northern wynd
Sent thou me my swetynge ;
Blow northern wynd,
Blow, blow, blow.”

The “Cuckoo Song,” the most ancient with musical notes annexed, is considered by the same authority to belong to the early part of the next century :—

“Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuceu;
Groweth sed
And bloweth med,
And springeth the wde nu
Sing cuccu.”

The subjoined specimen shows the approximation of the language to the present at the commencement of the fifteenth century. It is a description of the royal garden of Windsor as it appeared in the year 1414, by James I. of Scotland, who had long been a prisoner in England :—

“Now was there maid fast by the Touris wall
A gardyn faire, and in the corneris set,
Ane herbere grene, with wandis long and small
Railit about; and so with treis set

* Political Songs of England, p. 251., printed for the Camden Society, 1843.

Was all the place, and hawthorn hegis knet,
 That lyf was non walkyng there forbye
 That myght within scarce any wight aspye.
 So thick the beuis and the levis grene,
 Beschadet all the allies that there were,
 And middis every herbere might be sene,
 The scharp grene suete junipere
 Growing so faire with branchis here and there,
 That as it semyt to a lyf without,
 The bewis spred the herbere all about.”*

The language of Shakspeare, nearly two centuries later, as he wrote it, differed considerably from that in which his plays are now presented to the public. The following is part of the well-known soliloquy, as given in an edition of 1603, and which is said with ten other plays to have been in the possession of Sir Thomas Hanmer, and was accidentally discovered in 1825. The quotation, it is likely, is in the original, ungarbled words of the great dramatist:—

“ *Ham.* O that this too much grieu’d and sallied flesh
 Would melt to nothing, or that the vniuersall
 Globe of heauen would turne al to a Chaos !
 O God within two moneths ; no not two, married,
 Mine vncle ! O ! let me not thinke of it,
 My father’s brother : but no more like
 My father, than I to *Hercules*.
 Within two moneths, ere yet the salt of most
 Vnrighteous feates had left their flushing
 In her galled eyes, she married: O ! God, a beast
 Deuoyd of reason would not have made
 Such speede. Frailtie, thy name is Woman.”

But at the end of the fourteenth century the model of the language had doubtless been formed. Many books, now perfectly intelligible, were written before Edward III.

* Poetical Remains of James I., Edinburgh, 1783.

Half a century before that time may be seen bright indications of advancement. Shortly after the close of the reign of Edward I. the English language had produced one of the earliest accounts of remote regions in Mandeville, the earliest appeal to the people on religious topics in Wickliffe, and the second poet of Europe in Chaucer.

The improvement of the native tongue, and its more general use by the learned, opened the way for the popular spread of information. It is manifest that so long as the languages of science and common life were different, there could be no effective advance in national civilisation. Knowledge was a monopoly cultivated by a class whose instrument of exchange was current only among themselves. The community at large were shut out, could neither aid in its diffusion nor participate in its fruits. Hence the field of discovery and improvement, as well as of profit, was circumscribed. Between the intellectual and mechanical there was no communication, no common highway on which they could travel together for mutual benefit. The world of mind and the world of matter were separate and incommunicable jurisdictions. At present are sometimes heard complaints of the undue importance attached to the dead languages in education, but our position is infinitely more favourable than that of our remote ancestors. Pending the period under notice, from the Conquest to the dawn of the Reformation, every pursuit and avocation that had any pretensions to elevation, thought, or sentiment, was inscrutable and inaccessible to the people. The Scriptures were either in their original tongues or translated into Latin only; the mass and other services of the Church were celebrated in the same unknown tongue. The plots of dramatic entertainments were founded on scriptural incidents, and were performed by ecclesiastics in Latin. Law proceedings

were mystified in the same manner, and partly so continued in respect of pleadings and processes up to the year 1731. The agricultural treatises, composed during the dark ages, for the instruction of farmers and their servants, were in Latin. Even the accounts of the expenses and profits of farms were kept in the same learned character, or a jargon intended to pass for it, though not remarkable, I believe, for classical purity. Arabic figures not having been introduced, Roman numerals, the Vs and Xs, with which we now only number chapters, were the instruments of notation, and formed the inconvenient symbols used in ciphering, in which accounts were kept, and reckonings in pounds, shillings, and pence cast up. The only surviving rags of these grotesque disguises are in medical prescriptions, and the custom of penning these in dog-Latin rather than plain English would probably be more honoured in the breach than observance.

Next to the predominance of Latin, the too exclusive predominance of the priesthood was an obstruction to general civilisation. Their ascendancy had certainly a legitimate origin, being founded on superior knowledge and attainments. As the depositaries of the learning of the age, they might justly claim to be its chief directors; entitled to the enjoyment and exercise of its chief honours, offices, and functions; and to be the first ministers of the crown, as well as the physicians, teachers, and defenders of the people. But their empire had become too universal and long-continued. Like the feudal system, their season of most effective usefulness had passed away, and a power too absolute and irresponsible had produced degeneracy. Conscious of an enviable social supremacy, and perhaps of its being beyond existing deserts, they were naturally apprehensive of inquiry and of change. Innovation was not likely to improve their position, but

might endanger it. Society, however, had outgrown its leading-strings, had become restless, and was urgent to move forward. The clergy were men of one interest and one book, and so long as these were unquestioned there was no scope for expansion on any side ; for the dominion of the priesthood, like that of imperial Rome, was engrossing, ubiquitous, and omnipotent. The jealousy with which they beheld any novelty or new competition for popular favour may be instanced in the hostility evinced by them against the revival of classical literature. From their vast influence, they were long able to impede the advance of knowledge and keep the human mind in a state of passive obedience and non-resistance to their own monopolising jurisdiction.

A third obstruction to social advancement that may be mentioned, was the general mistake as to the real nature of knowledge. For upwards of 1000 years after the introduction of Christianity society was absorbed in theological controversies frequently involving dogmas absurd or trivial. Of this nature were the disputes about the commencement of the festival of Easter ; about the tonsure or shaven crown of the monks ; on the investiture of bishops, whether it pertained to the Prince or the Pope ; upon original sin, and the miraculous conception. Coupled with these, were, doubtless, inquiries of a more practical import, but which have mostly up to the present continued to baffle human ingenuity, namely,—researches for the philosopher's stone, for the transmutation of all metals into gold, for the elixir of life to cure all diseases and make man immortal, and the perpetual motion. The squaring of the circle and aerial navigation were the engrossments of a later age. Much talent was wasted in the sophistries and verbiage of the School Philosophy ; which, in fact, was no philosophy at all, only a wrangling about words and verbal

conceits. For example, the schoolmen would contend, and nations and universities would be divided upon the issue, that two contradictory propositions might be both true, or that a body might be in two places at once.

Our great countryman Roger Bacon tried to put the world in a better track, but his endeavours were not immediately successful. This luminary of the thirteenth century recommended his contemporaries to interrogate nature by actual experiments, in lieu of wasting time in verbal subtleties and abstract reasonings. "No man," says he, "can be so thoroughly convinced that fire will burn as by actually thrusting his hand into the flames." The laws of nature and the properties of matter were the proper objects of inquiry. This prodigy of his age despised magic, incantations, and other tricks, as criminal impositions on the credulity of the multitude, and affirmed that more surprising works might be performed by the combined powers of art and science than ever were pretended to be performed by magic. "I will now," says he, "mention some of the wonderful works of art and nature in which there is nothing of magic, and which magic could not perform. Instruments may be made by which the largest ships, with only one man guiding them, will be carried with greater velocity than if they were full of sailors. Chariots may be constructed that will move with incredible rapidity, without the help of animals; instruments of flying may be formed in which a man, sitting at his ease, and meditating on any subject, may beat the air with his artificial wings, after the manner of birds; a small instrument may be made to raise or depress the greatest weights; an instrument may be fabricated by which one man may draw a thousand men to him by force and against their wills; as also machines which will enable men to walk at the bottom of seas or

rivers without danger." Most of the wonders here indicated have been accomplished in modern times, though by means probably very different from those imagined by Roger Bacon.

Before leaving the age of conquest, feudalism, and intellectual delusions, it may be fit to award to it its just share of deserving. It was a step in civilisation, and helped to mitigate many evils and open the way to further improvements. Even the monks contributed to advance useful arts. They were admirable penmen and illuminators, understood gardening and architecture well, had a quick eye for the beautiful and picturesque in rural scenery ; and the excellent vine-stocks still found at Fountain Abbey, Bolton, and Kenilworth, attest that they were not unmindful of the culture of the grape any more than of its juices.

Some memorials still exist, tending to illustrate artistic products at the commencement of the period we have been reviewing, and with a short notice of which we shall conclude the chapter. One of the most remarkable is the Bayeux tapestry, formerly preserved in the cathedral of Bayeux, but since 1803 removed to the hotel of the prefecture of that city. This curious relic is a roll of linen, 214 feet long and 20 inches broad, on which is worked, with worsted of different colours, a representation, in seventy-two distinct compartments, of the progress of the Conquest. Mr. Bruce, the latest examiner of this curious relic, adopts the common opinion that it was executed by English operatives, under the direction of Matilda, wife of William I. Many of its gawky figures are without stockings, though more are without shoes, which make it probable that shoes were less generally worn than stockings at the ducal court. The common people, for the most part, had no stockings, nor any other covering on their legs ; and even the

clergy celebrated mass with their legs bare, till a law was made against the practice in 785. Wooden shoes, which are now esteemed the mark of extreme indigence, were worn by the greatest princes of Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Another historical memorial is the Roll of Battle Abbey. It contained the description of the noblemen and gentlemen of rank who came over with William, and survived the battle of Hastings. The original roll is lost; but copies have been preserved, from which the document has been repeatedly printed. It is believed, however, that these transcripts are far from correct, many names having been inserted by the monks to gratify families who were not at the battle.

The Domesday Book comprises a valuable statistical account of the country at the Conquest, and is still preserved in two volumes in the Exchequer. The first is a large folio of vellum, in 382 double pages, written in a small character, and contains thirty-one counties, beginning with Kent and ending with Lincolnshire. The other is a quarto volume of 450 double pages, in a large character, containing only the counties of Essex, Norfolk, and Sussex. There is no description of the four northern counties; and the monks evaded making accurate returns of the abbey lands. The object of the survey was doubtless fiscal, and directed to the extent of each estate, its division into arable land, meadow, pasture, and wood; the names of the owners and tenants; the number of inhabitants, and their condition, whether free or servile; the value of the whole, and the amount of land-tax paid before and since the Conquest. This curious exposition of the kingdom was reprinted in 1783 among other public records, in consequence of an address of the House of Lords.

CHAPTER III.

BARONIAL AND FRENCH WARS OF THE PLANTAGENET ERA.

Calamities of a divided or unsettled Royal Succession.—Extent of the Norman Confiscations.—Reconciliation of Races.—Baronial Wars.—Institutions of Clarendon.—Territorial Possessions in France.—Character of the English and French Armies.—Results of Military Organisation.—Wars of the Roses.—Reflections on the Mediæval Period.—Elements of Progress in Government, Laws, Education, and Useful Discoveries.—Liabilities to Famine, Pestilence, and Conflagrations during the Plantagenet Era.

ALTHOUGH the Norman subjugation was advantageous in strengthening the realm against external aggression, by the national unity it established, it failed to guarantee foreign or internal peace. For centuries after the death of the Conqueror, war and violence formed the characteristic features of the age. These disorders principally resulted from the absence of a fixed right of succession in the crown, from the rival claims of the regal, sacerdotal, and baronial orders, and lastly from the continental territories acquired by the accession of the Norman dynasty. The Conquest had consolidated England, while it had created a divergent interest abroad; and the effect of this divided rule appeared immediately on the death of William I.

By his will the king left the duchy of Normandy to his eldest son Robert and the kingdom of England to his second son William; while his youngest son Henry had only a legacy of 5000 pounds of silver, but who finally succeeded both to the royal crown and the ducal coronet.

The great barons of the Conquest were also divided in interest as well as the sovereign ; they were almost all possessed of estates and fiefs in both countries, and the division of power made them uneasy about the tenure of their possessions, foreseeing that if the king and duke were at war, as happened immediately after the Conqueror's death, it would be impossible to preserve their allegiance to both masters, and that they must either resign their ancient patrimonies in Normandy or their new acquisitions in England.

However, the unsettled state of the royal succession formed the cardinal source of public disturbance ; not being indubitably fixed by the constitutional maxim of corporate perpetuity that "the king never dies," the death of the sovereign was invariably followed by an interval of rapine and confusion. The popular assumption was, that till a new king had ascended the throne and received the homage of his subjects, there could be no violation of the king's peace ; and in consequence of this mischievous impression of the chief authority of the realm being in abeyance, the administration of justice was suspended, and crimes and outrages of all sorts were perpetrated with impunity. Such pernicious doctrine led to the uninterrupted civil broils under Stephen, his assumption of power being held an usurpation, and, pending his disputed title, neither law nor government was deemed in force.

These confusions had one beneficial issue in helping to raise up the depressed Anglo-Saxons ; for it was to obtain the auxiliary aid of this humiliated race that William Rufus and his immediate successors made important concessions to them. Severe as the spoliation of the conquerors had been, the extent of it may in some respects have been exaggerated or misapprehended. The

true policy of the invaders was obviously only to overcome resistance, not to exterminate the inhabitants. What would have been the worth of the great prize they had won without tenants to occupy and serfs to cultivate their acquired domains? It was their manifest interest to spare all who submitted, or who from their pursuits or occupations were not likely to be obstructive to the establishment of the new authorities; and this generally appears to have been the course pursued. According to Gervase of Tilbury, the estates of those only who had borne arms against William I. were confiscated, though the others were subjected to the feudal superiority of a Norman lord. The extensive possessions of the clergy remained uncurtailed, but their tenure was made military in lieu of secular by conversion into knights' services. At the period of the great survey recorded in Domesday Book, 8000 mesne tenants, all English, held manors, showing that no war of extermination had been waged against the middle order of rural life. The promptitude with which William renewed the charters of London and other cities, guaranteeing to them the enjoyment of municipal rights, shows that he was ready to conciliate as well as subdue. From these facts, the inducements were evident in the Red King and his Norman successors to try to conciliate the Anglo-Saxon population, forming, as they did, from numbers, industry, and subordinate proprietary, an influential division of the community. The ruling class were little more than a handful among them, but upholding their mastery by military organisation and the garrisoning of the chief cities and fortresses of the kingdom. What was the exact number of the Normans on their first arrival has not been stated by historians, but an approximate estimate, perhaps, may be formed from a comparison of the

number of vessels employed in the Norman descent with that employed by the Romans in their second invasion of Britain. The total armament of Julius Cæsar, in cavalry and infantry, amounted to 32,000 men, conveyed across the Channel in 800 first-class vessels. The number of vessels employed by the Conqueror amounted to 3000, but of which only between 600 and 700 were of a superior construction. Supposing the Normans trebled in number that of the Romans, it must have fallen below 100,000, or barely one-twentieth of the population of England.

The extreme inequality in the two divisions of the community was productive of results not unworthy of note. Victory had decided in favour of the Normans; but though the chances of war had been in their favour, they could not confer upon them any social or physical superiorities which they did not before possess over their newly acquired subjects. Consequently, the great numerical superiority of the conquered had its natural issue. Although subdued, the Anglo-Saxon elements of the community, in national language and customs, recovered their ascendancy at no remote period from the Conquest. The amalgamation of the two people was favoured by the policy of the Normans, which was to conciliate the mass of the inhabitants, and in this they appear to have been successful after the fierce struggle that marked the beginning of the connexion had terminated. But if the English recovered their laws, manners, and municipal institutions, their Norman masters never lost the higher distinctions of sovereign rule and feudal superiority over the kingdom. These prerogatives they carefully cherished and transmitted to their descendants by a jealous exclusion of the subject race from participation in power; and generations elapsed before a single Saxon family could reach the highest honours of the

state. Ineligible to the first rank of the barons, they could only seek to become the vassals of a Norman lord by military tenure. But to this disfranchisement the people seem to have been early reconciled, and anything like national antipathy to Norman ascendancy had ceased at the end of the reign of the first Henry.*

The darkest term of the present period was doubtless under the Norman line. Neither oaths, nor laws, nor the ties of blood were regarded by the princes of this family. The Conqueror had been engaged in open war against his rebellious son Robert in Normandy, and upon his death the three surviving brothers were unceasingly occupied in plots or open hostilities for the possession of the crown of England, in defiance of the testamentary settlement king William had made of his English and transmarine dominions. These struggles attained the culminating point under Stephen, the fourth and last of the Anglo-Norman dynasty. Without a valid title to the crown, this sovereign was compelled to make concessions to the clergy and nobility, subversive of the needful authority to protect the people. The barons became each a despot in his own domain, and partly from their mutual destructive wars and the common brigandage they indulged toward the entire community, no general security was left for persons, property, or industry. Amidst this general abeyance of order, the productive arts were neglected, the land left untilled, and a grievous famine ensued which reduced to a common destitution the spoilers and their victims.

The half-civilised character of the age accounts for some of its revolting irregularities. It can hardly excite surprise that a period of savage violence was one

* Hallam's History of the Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 292.

also of gross immorality, and that such license of indulgence was common to all ranks. Organised bands of prostitutes, with other cognate disorderlies, Peter of Blois relates, formed a regular subdivision of the retinue of the royal court in its progresses, and stews were established by law in London and probably other of the chief towns. Besides sensuality, and the building of castles, the excitement of the time took an accelerated spiritual direction, and more abbeys were erected in the twenty years of Stephen's reign than in a century before.

The next reign promised to compose the distractions of this tumultuary era. The more legitimate title of Henry II., the first of the Plantagenets, seconded his energetic efforts to repress baronial feuds and rapine. But a more subtle and pertinacious obstruction to order existed than baronial license in the irreconcilable pretensions of the clergy. Ecclesiastics persisting in claiming exemption from magisterial authority in criminal prosecutions, only spiritual punishment could be inflicted; and as the clergy had greatly increased in number, and many of them were of the most abandoned character, very flagrant offences were committed with impunity. They could neither be punished nor protected by the common law. If a clergyman was guilty of murder he could only be degraded, or if killed the offender could only suffer excommunication. It was to check these judicial obstructions that a great council was summoned, and the sixteen laws, termed the Institutions of Clarendon, were agreed to. They were fiercely opposed by the celebrated Thomas-à-Becket, who was seconded in his resistance by the court of Rome; and the struggle maintained in defence of clerical supremacy led, as is well known, to the violent death of the haughty prelate.

The picture of the mediæval period would be incomplete if, after noticing the vices of the two ascendant orders by which it was distinguished, I omitted to mention some redeeming virtues. Proud and oppressive as the yoke of the Norman barons had been, obstructive and impoverishing as were their ferocious domestic feuds, it is to the descendants of these ruthless magnates that the nation is indebted for the first foundation of its liberties. It was the firm efforts of the Norman lords, assisted by Langfranc and other eminent prelates, that extorted from the sovereign Magna Charta; and though an imperfect concession measured by later constitutional standards, it was a noble and comprehensive instrument for the age in which it was framed. The institution of Chivalry, a contemporary handmaid of progress, was intimately connected with the spirit and social position of the baronage, and without which it is probable it would not have taken root and flourished. The independence of the great lords made personal honour and fidelity the chief ties among them; the just and true they felt bound to vindicate, not only in their own right but that of the helpless and innocent generally, especially of the fair sex. Upon these elevated sentiments modern gallantry and high feeling originated, and were ultimately raised to a pitch of refinement far transcending the reach of any state of antiquity.

In favour of the Clergy, though not so prominent as the barons in controlling regal license or elevating the character of private life, some compensatory gains may be set off against their usurpations. In the deepest humiliation of the people they were the popular tribunes and emancipators. To them civilisation is unquestionably indebted for its earliest elementary developments; and

though monachism was hostile to the revival of ancient learning, it is to the religious orders we owe the first advances in agriculture, gardening, and architecture.

The territorial connexion of England with France forms a dazzling but unsubstantial vision of early history. The martial glories of Crecy, Poictiers, and Agincourt, are resplendent in recital, but yielded no lasting fruits, mainly serving only to flatter the ambition of the prince and the pride of his aristocracy. The struggle for the retention of continental possession was maintained through the whole of the Plantagenet era, subject to extraordinary vicissitudes. At one period the dominion of England over France was more extensive and absolute than that of the French monarch. One-fifth part of modern France acknowledged the sway of Henry II., including the whole Atlantic coast, so important from local proximity and its free communication with England. Under the weak and unpopular government of John, the French recovered possession of the whole of Normandy, but English authority was re-established by the splendid abilities of Edward III., seconded by those of his heroic son. English triumphs reached the culminating point by the great victory of Henry V. at Agincourt. All, however, was again lost in the next reign, from the crown devolving to an infant successor under a divided ministry; while the Dauphin, in the dawn of manhood, dexterously uniting the different factions under his banner, successfully directed their combined efforts against the invaders of his country. Generally, the countries between the Loire and the Seine became the theatre of the most active warfare, finally terminating in the expulsion of the English from all their conquests. It was in these conflicts that the celebrated Maid of Orleans became distinguished, and whose

remarkable enthusiasm, originating in noble motives, has made her memory immortal.*

It may be observed of the French war, that prior to the death of Henry V. it had become extremely unpopular; in the last year of his reign a petition was presented to parliament, showing that the people were impoverished by the taxes raised to defray the military expenditure. In 1422 parliament, thinking that the war ought to support itself out of the conquered province, would only grant a fifteenth and the clergy a tenth, and passed an Act to check the export of money from the kingdom.

Burdensome and exhausting as the war was, it in some respect exerted a beneficial influence. It cannot be denied that the progress of order and the security of European states have been intimately connected with the development of military discipline and organisation. At an early period there was no standing military force or body of men exclusively trained to the use of arms apart from the general population; and in consequence of this defenceless condition, every community was at the mercy of any band of marauders who might confederate for its ravage and plunder. Such unpreparedness accounts for the inroads to which the western states of Europe were for a long period subjected by the Scandinavian nations, whose devastating armaments were often extremely insignificant in numerical force. An instance of this occurs in the history of France, which in the ninth century opposed a feeble resistance to the piratical incursions of the Normans. Upon one occasion, A. D. 865, a body of 200 Normans effected a landing to carry off some wine

* The relative force of states about this period (1454) has been estimated as under by Mr. Hallam: — “ France, 30,000; England, 30,000; Scotland, 10,000; Portugal, 6,000. In 1414 the king of France had 2,000,000 ducats of revenue; England, 700,000; Spain, 3,000,000.” — *Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 493.

from the vicinity of Paris, penetrated to the capital, and retired unmolested through the country with their booty.* It was doubtless a similar absence of military and naval defences that for centuries disquieted England and rendered her a prey to the plundering descents of the Danes and Saxons.

In England, the conclusive settlement of the feudal system after the Conquest effectually protected the kingdom against its former irregular hordes of desolators. The great baronial domains and more numerous knight-fees into which the country had been divided and subdivided, on tenure of military services, originated an organised and disciplined army, ready at the call of the sovereign to repel any danger. But this feudal militia did not long preserve its entirety of character, but speedily underwent a change, by the substitution of a pecuniary payment to the crown for military duties. From the time of Henry II. the escuage or commutation for personal services had become universal; consequently the royal army became a mercenary force composed of hired troops, the great portion of whom were knights and gentlemen serving for pay, and not by tenure or right of birth, preserving nothing of the feudal character.†

“It was not,” as Mr. Hallam observes, “the nobility of England; not the feudal tenants, who won the battles of Crecy and Poictiers, for these were fully matched in the ranks of France; but the yeomen who drew the bow with strong and steady arms, accustomed to use it in their native fields, and rendered fearless by personal competence and civil freedom.” At the subsequent battle of Agincourt the bold yeomen signalled their prowess.

* Hallam’s Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 43.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 345.

“ The English bowmen, as usual,” says Lingard, “ by the strength of their arms and stoutness of their hearts, did much to ensure the victory. As soon as they were within bowshot, they discharged such showers of their strong arrows of three feet long, that the French knights bent down their heads to avoid them. The cavalry tried to break the English line by a charge. They were repulsed with an array of pikes.” The feudal militia continued in France long after it had been superseded in England by hired troops, composing a smaller but better disciplined army of freemen. This may partly account for the results of the famous battles referred to. The French gentlemen were not less courageous than those of England, but their followers, being mostly serfs, were no match for their emancipated opponents. Of the valiant knights of the middle ages, so renowned in the songs of which they were the theme and remunerators, it may not be improper to remark that they wore armour, while the common soldiers had no such protection.

The fierce spirit of the age, and its semi-barbarous character, unrelieved and unoccupied by the more refined and diversified pursuits which a superior civilisation affords, rendered war almost an indispensable excitement. The nation had complained of the ruinous tendency of the French war; but it was no sooner relieved from transmarine entanglements than it became embroiled in a far more destructive internal feud. This was the long and bloody struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster, known as the war between the red and the white roses, from the devices which distinguished the conflicting combatants. This furious struggle lasted thirty years, was signalised by twelve pitched battles, cost the lives of eighty royal princes, and almost annihilated the ancient nobility. It was a question of right,

originating in the rival claims to the throne of two noble families. Henry VI. descended from a fourth son of Edward III., but the Duke of York descended from a third son of that monarch. The Lancaster settlement was sanctioned by parliament, but the superior hereditary right of York was indisputable. His pretensions were supported by many of the principal nobility, among them the renowned Earl of Warwick, himself a host from his noble daring and captivating munificence. Thirty thousand persons are said to have daily fed at his tables in the different manors and castles he possessed in various parts of England. His profuse hospitality corrupted the people, since his numerous retainers were more devoted to his will than the prince or the law. He was, as Hume observes, "the greatest as well as the last of those mighty barons who formerly overawed the crown and rendered the people incapable of any settled system of civil government." The great national feud in which Warwick was so conspicuous, was finally terminated by a nuptial union, Henry VII. of Richmond marrying, in 1486, the princess Elizabeth; thus the heiress of the house of York became queen of England, and the long-desired blending of the roses accomplished.

In the preceding year the Earl of Richmond had won the decisive victory of Bosworth, which closed the dark career of the usurper, Richard III., whose history is more interesting as a dramatic performance than historical narrative. Richard III. formed the last link of the line of Plantagenet; a family that had inherited the throne upwards of 300 years, commencing with the accession of Henry II. Before leaving this long period and inaugurating the more pacific era of the Tudor dynasty, it will be useful to advert to some distinguishing features

perhaps not sufficiently set forth, pending this protracted term of public annals.

The first reflection that offers pertains to its diversified and animated character, comprehending not only great national wars but important episodical events, that in different degrees gave form and substance to the community. The heroic Crusades and not less generous aspirations of Chivalry, the rise and fall of the order of Knights Templars, and the first opening by Wickliff of the great volume of the Protestant Reformation, all tended to awaken and strengthen the public mind and prepare it for more signal manifestations. In the political constitution of the country had appeared important organic developments. For two centuries after the Conquest the government consisted of two estates only, the king and the assembly of barons and prelates. But in the third century a third estate had emerged and become a distinctive integer of the constitution. In addition to the judicial advances mentioned in the preceding chapter, may be added the 25 Edw. III., which defines treasonable offences by limiting them to three, namely, conspiring the death of the king, levying war against him, or adhering to his enemies. Another Act, the 28 Edw. III., affords increased personal and proprietary security, by enacting that no man shall be dispossessed of his land or tenement, nor arrested, imprisoned, or put to death, without first being subjected to legal procedure. The necessity of such safeguards sufficiently attests the irregular violence that had previously existed.

By slow degrees the judicial combat was superseded by the more rational mode of trial by jury, and lawyers took the place of champions. Henry II. contributed to this improvement, especially in civil causes. He allowed the defendant in a plea of right to support his title either by

single combat or by the oaths of twelve of his neighbours ; neither of them, however, likely to prove very infallible criteria of the right and wrong.

The criminal but probably too deeply inculpated reign of Richard III. is brightened by at least two meritorious acts. By one justices of the peace are empowered to accept bail for persons suspected of felony. Another was a great relief to the subject, by prohibiting the demand of any loan or benevolence ; these levies had been a heavy grievance, for the king named the sum, and payment was made compulsory.

Towards the middle and close of the present era, the ascendancy of the sacerdotal order had become less exclusively engrossing. During the first century and a half after the Conquest almost the entire wealth and intellect of the community were dedicated to the exaltation of the priesthood. It was the period when the principal arts and industry of society were occupied in the erection and beautifying of magnificent cathedrals, and the founding of monasteries, the impressive remains of which still attest the ruling passion of the age. From the accession of William I. to the reign of John, 557 religious houses had been founded. To each of these an episcopal or conventional school was annexed, in which the young clergy were instructed in theology, the classics, church music, and medicine. From the middle of the thirteenth to that of the fifteenth centuries, the chief colleges and halls of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were endowed. Prior to these, in the chief cities and towns, what were termed Illustrious Schools had been established, in which youth were taught grammar, logic, and other branches of learning. The teachers of these appear to have been licensed, since the last canon of the Council of Westminster, held in 1138, prohibits the scholastics of cathe-

drels from taking money for licenses to teachers of schools in towns and villages. In 1447 there appears to have been a commencement of popular education in the city of London. In that year four incumbents of parishes, taking into consideration the low state of education in the city, petitioned parliament for leave to themselves and successors to set up grammar-schools in their respective parishes of Great Allhallows, St. Andrew Holborn, St. Peter Cornhill, and St. Mary Colechurch. Leave was granted by the king, and the attempt having succeeded, five more parishes of the city followed the example.

Two important auxiliaries to educational progress had been acquired in the discovery of the art of making paper and in the introduction of the art of printing by moveable types. It is unknown to whom the merit of first making paper is due. It had probably advanced through many intermediate stages, from the ancient papyrus, before it began to be made of cotton, and was called *charta bombycina*, or cotton paper. About the eleventh century it began to be made of linen rags, and so it long continued. The ingenious William Caxton introduced printing into England in 1473; but this was not till thirty years had elapsed from the discovery of metallic types in Germany. Assisted by Thomas Milling, Abbot of Westminster, Caxton set up a printing press in the almonry of the abbey, and thence produced a little French work, called "The Game of Chess." Two years later he printed the first edition of the works of the first English poet—Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales."

The time had certainly arrived when some aids had become desirable, not only to popular but patrician illumination. In 1371 a curious example occurred of the limits of geographical information. Parliament granted an aid to the king of 50,000*l.*, by an assessment of 22*s.* 3*d.*

on each parish, supposing the number of parishes to be 45,000. But it was soon found that they did not amount to one-fifth of that number; consequently the tax would not have raised one-fifth part of the sum intended. To remedy this blunder, a new parliament was summoned, which raised the tax to 5*l.* 10*s.* on each parish. In this last assembly only half the knights and burgesses who sat in the former were summoned; the less accomplished, it is likely, being left to more congenial pursuits than fiscal legislation.

I shall conclude the Plantagenet era with noticing three of the direst calamities with which it was afflicted. These were fire, famine, and pestilence.

The first resulted from nearly all buildings being of wood, and an imperfect municipal police. The second originated, not only in bad seasons, crude husbandry, and the desolation of war, but from the absence of commerce, and deficient internal communications, which prevented the scarcity of one district being relieved by the redundant produce of another. Great fluctuation in prices and in the wages of labour necessarily resulted from frequent famines and their natural consequence, the increased mortality of the people. The pestilential fevers which raged with such malignity may in part be ascribed to the want of food, fresh air, and clothing; to vast tracts of undrained land, to towns crowded and filthy, together with the low state of medical knowledge.

One of the most destructive plagues occurred under Edward III. in 1349; it had appeared some time previously in Asia, then, spreading to the western continent, visited France with violence, and next settled in England. One-half the nation is said to have perished by this fearful visitation; London especially suffered, and in one

year buried 50,000 of its inhabitants in the churchyard of the Charterhouse.

These calamities may be all mainly attributed to an imperfect Civilisation. They were not peculiar to this country, but in frequency and aggravation of type pertained to the dark ages of Europe. "Evil indeed," says Mr. Hallam, "were those days in France, when, out of seventy-three years, the reigns of Hugh Capet and his two successors, forty-eight were years of famine. Evil were the days for five years from 1015 in the whole western world, when not a country could be named that was not destitute of bread. There were famines, so Radulphus Glaber and other contemporary writers tell us, in which mothers ate their children, and children their parents, and human flesh was sold with little pretence of concealment in the markets."*

It may be observed of this picture, as of the prevalent serfage of Europe, that if living men were made marketable, it was no great aggravation of the enormity that their dead bodies might be saleable.

CHAPTER IV.

OBSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PAPACY TO CIVILISATION.

BEFORE leaving the mediæval period of history it may be necessary to bring out with more precision, and in stronger relief, the influence on progress of the Universal Church. The subject has been already incidentally touched upon, and will be subsequently resumed, but the papal power in the dark ages was so irresistible and

* Hist. Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 327.

omnipresent in ascendancy over Christendom, that its progressive or obstructive tendencies seem to claim at this stage of inquiry a distinct recapitulation. In its infancy the Roman Church laid no claim to temporal power, only to the spiritual guidance of mankind. In this unpretentious guise it presented no aspect restrictive of social advancement; on the contrary, it might be beneficial, and doubtless the central authority it succeeded in arrogating contributed both to preserve and diffuse Christianity in the early stages of its promulgation. But the possession of ecclesiastical power speedily issued in the assumption of a not less absolute and coextensive secular domination. From this twofold consolidation resulted the corruptions and repressive efforts of the Papedom.

Individual enormities of the pontiffs formed only one of the world's afflictions from the rapid evolution of spiritual into lay ascendancy. Installed in a sovereignty the most fascinating to human pride, and exercising absolute sway over the consciences, services, and affections of men, it was natural that the Roman see should seek by every contrivance which subtlety and fraud could devise to perpetuate so enviable a despotism. Hence it happened that so long as papal pretensions continued unchallenged and unweakened by their own unbearable pressure, there could be no social change—no progress—no hope for prostrate humanity. God's vicegerents ruled in regular apostolic succession; and what mortal would dare to impugn so consecrated a heritage? They held the keys of heaven, they wielded the sceptre of the earth; for whatever pertained to weal or woe, above or beneath, they were all-sufficient. That which was not of them, was construed to be against them. It followed that science and invention could not thrive or coexist

with Popery, from their tendency to unmask its impostures ; and it was, doubtless, from this cause that the priesthood waged the relentless war it is known to have done against the surviving remains of ancient learning ; that innumerable MSS., which had escaped Vandal rage, were unsparingly destroyed, or the writings on them obliterated to make way for saintly legends and monkish superstitions. In this war against ancient literature many of the books of Tacitus, Livy, and Polybius are conjectured to have been lost ; and the Western states of Europe became leavened into one inert mass of ignorance and slavery, and so continued for centuries, during the dreary interval extending from the eleventh to the close of the fifteenth century, and aptly termed the Dark Ages.

Under such mephitic cloud everything tending to freedom, elevation, or secular enjoyment, was rigorously proscribed. Misery, credulity, and abasement were the accepted faith and esteemed excellence of nations. Mentally in bondage, and physically suffering great privations, it is hardly possible to form a comparative idea of the depth of human wretchedness. But proximately perhaps some vague conception may be reached, merely of the distressing terrors in which men lived in an age in which the entire knowledge in repute consisted of nursery frights, of lying stories of saints, devils, ghosts, and witches ; blended in England with Scandinavian ogres, or the traditional mythology of Pucks, fairies, elves, and evil spirits, inherited from the aboriginal Britons. From this supernatural region there was no escape ; nor could any class be exempt from its orthodox belief. For none was there either truth or science ; since all that was not orally known was wrapped in the mysteries of an unknown tongue. Latin was the sole language of books, the Scriptures, and religious services,

of law proceedings and the laws themselves (*Magna Charta* to wit) : even plays and dramatic entertainments were in Latin ; and with this Latin not only were the mass of the people unacquainted, but the mass of the people's teachers — the monks and lay clergy.

The blind led the blind, and the inevitable result followed. The physical condition was in keeping with the intellectual. Church lands there were in great plenty ; cathedrals and castles in abundance, built or building : but what of the mansions of the people, their household comforts, or even ordinary diet ? It is unnecessary to cite familiar history ; suffice it to say, that in these times of meridian Popery, men could not, even in the more favoured classes, eat fresh meat the year round. In these rampant days of the Breakspeares, Hildebrands, and Thomas-à-Beckets artificial winter food for cattle had not been discovered, and of course they would be much too lean for slaughter and food, till vernal warmth and rains had renewed the herbage. Neither were there chimneys, glazed windows, Brussels or Kidderminster for queen, noble, or prelate. What Gurth or Gawain had for pillow, couch, clothing, or sustenance Erasmus has afforded us some intimations, and of which living examples may perhaps be found among the Bushmen, Cherokees, or Fuegians.

It would, however, be unfair to affiliate all those middle-age privations and hardships on Popery : partly they were transmitted barbarisms ; but of this Popery stands justly impeached in the fact that had it held on in its unmitigated sway, mankind would have slowly escaped from them ; that by force, fraud, and astute combination, it did all in its power to perpetuate them by the cruel persecution of impugners, and the vigilant suppression of every inquiry tending to supersede the established regi-

men and domination. Therefore, with little qualification, it may be safely affirmed, that if society is not now in mediæval depression, no thanks to the Gregories, Urbans, Leos, or their satellites : knowledge was their foe, and they did their utmost to stop its diffusion. Even when the primal art of printing — the mother and promulgator of all other arts — was discovered, what did they do? — exclaimed, “That’s a light! if that light is not put out, we shall be put out.” And so it was—at least they were greatly curtailed in influence and dimmed in lustre.

Whatever touched the network in which the Papacy had entangled the world, though in its most distant meshes, was nervously felt. So astronomy was anathematised — held to be demoniacal — and Galileo dungeoned and tortured, because he had found that the earth moved; and the poor old man after his liberation, under the semblance of recantation, still persisted, and said aside to his friends, “It does move notwithstanding.” Astronomy has greatly advanced since, despite the interdict of the Vatican; but it was the blessed Reformation which opened the broad pathway of science. Progress it guaranteed by securing for philosophy, morals, and literature the same freedom of research it won for Gospel truth. Intellect has been thus emancipated and genius left free. For England special graces have been to the present successively gained — for persecution a generous toleration — for asceticism, gloom, and bigotry, a genial and temperate social life — for narrow and prejudiced national exclusions a cosmopolitan freedom of intercourse — and for those in bonds or suffering everywhere, a noble sympathy if not relief.

CHAPTER V.

AGE OF THE TUDORS.

Characteristics of the Tudor Era. — Decline of the Feudal Nobility. — Abolition of Slavery and Vassalage. — Dismemberment of the Great Estates. — Influence of Trade and Manufactures. — Decay of Cities and Towns from Corporate Privileges; the Rise of Free Towns. — Insurrections of the People. — Origin of Pauperism. — Gradual Evolution of the Poor Laws. — Great Act of Queen Elizabeth. — Arbitrary Powers of the Tudors. — Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission. — Martial Law. — Social Life under Elizabeth. — Architecture. — Diet and Manners.

THE pacific era which commenced with the Tudors by the accession of Henry VII. served as a nursery for the undisturbed growth of the germs of public prosperity, that, despite of antecedent storms, had taken root. The ambitious wars of the Plantagenets, and not less destructive feuds of the barons, had rendered peace an essential requisite to national progress. It continued with little interruption for a century and a half; and in this long term of tranquillity the condition of the community in its internal relations — political, religious, and social — underwent signal advances. Exhausting, however, as the continental struggles had been, it is not impossible they may have had issues more favourable to development than absolute quietude during an equal period. For, even that peace may be beneficial, the stimuli of active pursuits and occupations are as essential to the maintenance of the energies of a nation as to the powers of an individual. Mere stagnation is certainly the most detrimental phase

a community can assume ; and it may therefore be held to have been highly conducive to advancement that, on the cessation of strife, the people were not left vacant of purpose, but opened for themselves a new sphere of activities, to which it is not improbable past trials and difficulties gave impulse and vivacity.

Two of the prominent characteristics of the Tudor period consisted in the fixed and more independent positions acquired by the extremes of society. The rise of the Commons on the one hand, and the more unchallenged power of the crown on the other, had both their origin in the decline of the feudal and ecclesiastical orders ; what these lost in possessions and influence, the people and the sovereign gained. As is not unusual with overruling ascendancies, each order had been mainly contributory to its own degradation, — the Church, by its arrogance and insatiable cupidity ; while the barons, by their furious private quarrels, had been literally self-destructive, and, like the anarchists of revolutionary France, from mutual jealousy and hatred, had almost effected their own entire extermination. The diminution in their number lessened their weight in the scale of government, and they were no longer able to prescribe with the same frequency and absoluteness limits to regal authority. At the same time, though the power of the crown had increased by the decline of the peerage, its exercise had become more amenable to legal sanctions than under the Norman princes. The despotism of the Tudors was equally unlimited with the forms of government that had for centuries preceded them, and less checked by competing claims ; yet their arbitrary rule had begun to be exercised, not wholly according to the dictates of royal caprice, but subject to admitted laws and institutions. Consequently, under the pretension of prerogative

or other title, they were wont to disguise or justify their proceedings. It was with this view that Henry VII., early in his reign, new modelled the Court of Star Chamber, by which, with the semblance of legality, he might be better enabled to carry on his fiscal levies and extortions. For such constitutional guarantees of responsible government in the letter, if not in the executive spirit of the laws, the nation is unquestionably indebted to the struggles of the Norman barons and their descendants, who extorted from the Plantagenet princes Magna Charta and other legal securities.

The other extreme of society adverted to, which had permanently risen into greater consideration, consisted of the vassals and slaves of the territorial proprietary. Of these new social developments the primary causes were a greater division of landed property and the extension of commerce and the industrial arts. By the attainders and forfeitures which ensued on the final victory of the Yorkists, some of the greatest of the old families had been broken up; but previously, by the quiet operations of law, the great estates had been in progress of dissolution. The decision under 12th Edw. IV., in the case of Tal-tarum, established that a recovery properly suffered by tenants in tail was good against the issue; thus in effect repealing the former statute *De Donis*, which consolidated the possessions of the nobility by right of primogeniture. Additional facilities for alienations were afforded in the reigns of Henry VII. and his successor, by which not only a new class of proprietors was created, but the land itself made more productive.

Simultaneously with the judicial changes which loosened the fetters on the soil of the kingdom, other causes had been in operation, tending to its subdivision, from the increased means of purchasing land accruing

from commercial gains. Fond of riches, Henry VII. zealously encouraged measures likely to augment national wealth, and was especially shrewd and vigilant in regard to the interests of trade. In 1496 he concluded a treaty with Burgundy, one of the most opulent and industrious countries of Western Europe, upon principles of enlightened reciprocity not unworthy of modern legislation. A mutual liberty of trading to each other's ports without passport or license, and of fishing on the coast of either party, is stipulated. Mutual protection against pirates is guaranteed, and reciprocal arrest of alien debtors agreed upon. Our staple home manufacture had been in steady progress since Edward III., in 1331, invited over the first weavers of fine woollens from the Netherlands, previously to which the English had been chiefly occupied as wool-growers, in furnishing to foreigners the raw material. These pursuits and occupations tended to increase the town inhabitants, or rather to create new hives of industry in place of the old decayed centres of population.

In the 3 Hen. VIII. c. 8., the decay of the ancient cities and towns corporate is remarked. Their decline has been ascribed by Mr. Hume to a better police and judicial administration, which, by the greater security they afforded, encouraged men of property to retire into the country. But the principal cause, probably, was their corporate privileges, which, in an earlier stage of the handicraft arts, may have protected them and tended to their improvement, but, maintained beyond the needful term of the industrial nursery, had become obstructive. Confining the right of carrying on trade to such of the inhabitants as were free of the corporation or members of a guild, it drove away the non-franchised to other towns, where such exclusions did not exist. Hence arose the flourishing state

of the open towns in the sixteenth century ; so that while York, Chester, Coventry, Winchester, and Lincoln, were declining in population, and many of their houses becoming ruins, Birmingham and Manchester were rapidly advancing in extent and prosperity. Manufacturers, no longer requiring chartered immunities or the shelter of walls or citadels, settled in places enjoying freedom and the local advantages adapted to their pursuits.

The progress of urban industry and influence led to a salutary revolution in the manners of the higher classes. At the commencement of the fifteenth century the ancient hospitality had begun to give way to more refined enjoyments ; and some of the barons, instead of dining in the great hall amidst a motley group of retainers, dined in a parlour with their families and select friends,—a deviation from old usages, and subjecting them to much popular reproach. In lieu of the coarse indulgences of their ancestors, foreign commerce and home products offered to the rich allurements of a different kind, which induced them, from motives of personal gratification, to lessen the number of idle dependents, and to grant a portion of their lands to tenants on condition of receiving rents instead of services, that might enable them to extend their pursuits beyond feasting, field-sports, or domestic warfare. In this way the progress of towns led to a salutary revolution in the private life of the great landowners, who exchanged for baronial power and pageantry the comforts and luxuries of more elegant costume, household conveniences, and domestic peace.

These epochs of social progress may be traced, and are well defined by the great popular movements of the community. Magna Charta was the triumph of constitutional law over mere despotism ; and though the franchises it conceded failed in practice to be rigorously

upheld, they evinced a sense of right and justice that could not be wholly disregarded. The next was a more popular movement, and though, like the first, it fell short of full fruition, it indicated the growth of opinion among the class subordinate to the nobility. In the insurrection of Wat Tyler, in 1381, the language of the insurgents, who were chiefly vassals, bespeaks men not unacquainted with the essentials of personal liberty. They required from the king the abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market towns without tolls or imposts, and a fixed rent on land instead of services due by villeinage. These demands were conceded, and, after the rebellion was crushed, revoked; but the spirit and intelligence they manifested among the people render it probable that the more onerous services of bondage were not reimposed. Seventy years later, the Commons again rose under Jack Cade, and were again put down; but this demonstration, like the preceding, though unsuccessful in regard to its immediate objects, left an abiding conviction of the popular strength, and doubtless helped greatly to mend the condition of the people. In this second rising, villeinage was not once alluded to; that question in the interim had been entirely settled: villeinage was nearly, if not wholly, swept away. What the Commons insisted upon in 1450, was the redress of political, or at least public, grievances, such as the wasteful expenditure of the king's revenues, unjust seizures of property by the crown, delays in the administration of justice, and the illegal interference of the nobility in the election of representatives of the people in the House of Commons.

The abolition of slavery in England was the work of centuries. It never appears to have been directly abolished by law, but to have been extinguished, or gradually

worn out under the action of public opinion. In its lowest form, slavery may be defined to be transmissible bondage without any right to property or change of place, and in all personal relations, either of marriage, children, or employment, being at the absolute disposal of a master. In this condition of degradation existed the labouring classes under the feudal system, but not without degrees of servitude. The villeins or villagers, though bound to the most servile offices of rural industry, were permitted to occupy small portions of land for their maintenance. The *bordarii** were allowed a cottage in exchange for poultry and eggs, and the cottars were employed in the occupations of smith and carpenter. Inferior to these were the thralls or *servi*, who were employed in the lowest drudgery about the lord's mansion. These were the veritable slaves, saleable and transferable as mere chattels.† The proportion of slaves of this description has been estimated‡ not to have formed at the Conquest above one-seventh part of the three classes of villeins, cottars, and serfs. The rest of society consisted of the barons and their vassals, socmen, free-tenants, citizens, and burgesses.

An effort at a general emancipation of bondmen in England was made in 1526, a bill for the purpose being introduced into the House of Lords; but after being read three times in one day, it was rejected. Henry VIII. had twelve years previously set a good example by granting a manumission to two of his slaves and their families, assigning in the preamble this equitable reason for his con-

* A term seemingly introduced at the Conquest, being unknown, Mr. Hallam says, except in Domesday Book.

† No Saxon was a slave. Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 224.

‡ Mackintosh's History of England, vol. i. p. 78.

duct: "That God had at first created all men equally free by nature, but that many had been reduced to slavery by the laws of men. We believe it, therefore, to be a pious act, and meritorious in the sight of God, to set certain of our slaves at liberty from bondage." Justice and moderation from such an imperious sovereign are not more unexpected than an opposite extreme of severity from another of different character and sentiments. Oliver Cromwell, though a stern religionist, did not scruple to send the Scottish prisoners taken at Dunbar in 1650 to the West Indian colonies as slaves. Public opinion, however, finally triumphed, and under Charles II. slavery was formally abolished by statute.

An important result of the abolition of villeinage and the establishment of the personal liberty of the labourer was the abandonment of him to his own conservative resources. Relieved from compulsory services, in exchange for freedom, he incurred the liability of his own maintenance in sickness or health, in work or inaction. The nexus of the feudal system had been protection and subsistence for service and obedience; but this relation severed, voluntary industry became the workman's sole dependence. Hence, as an object of legislative recognition, originated the modern *Poor*, consisting of those personally free, but without the means of supporting themselves by their labour unaided by the gratuitous assistance of the public.

In remarking this transition in society the different obligations of individuals in bondage and liberty is strikingly brought out. In slavery men may continue children with impunity, with little knowledge, forethought, or economy, — they are cared for by others; but in freedom they are left to themselves, and such qualities are indispensable. It follows that the extension of education, of

the domestic and prudential virtues, ought to keep pace with the extension of civil immunities.

After the decline of feudalism the first prominent manifestation of the emancipists was a disposition to idleness rather than to self maintenance by industry. They would not starve, neither would they work, but to either preferred theft or mendicity. It was to meet evils in these forms and the misplaced pity to which feigned distress early gave rise, that the first deterrent penalties of the law were directed. In 1349 "valiant beggars" are spoken of, who give themselves to idleness and vice, and sometimes theft, rather than labour for a living, and for the repression of which almsgiving is made punishable with imprisonment. This, however, was only the commencement of a long struggle of upwards of two centuries. Vagrancy, or a disposition to stroll at large through the country, seeking a dissolute living by the idle arts of imposture or petty depredation was the great moral pest of the time, and the first stage of transition from slave to free labour. It was subsequently augmented by the dissolution of the religious houses, and the necessity it imposed on the regular clergy, with their lay servitors and dependents, to find for themselves fresh means of subsistence and occupation. Contemporary with these changes from the increase of trade and manufactures, and subject to their unavoidable vicissitudes, the town population was greatly augmented, and contributed to swell the large floating mass of the destitute or vagrant that had been thrown on society.

In dealing with these social perplexities the law-makers did not act without discrimination, but sought to blend humanity with coercion. The most flagrant difficulty that confronted them corresponded to that which has been experienced in Hayti and other West

India islands on the abolition of black slavery, and consisted in an unwillingness to submit to regular habits of industry. Unlike more recent periods, in the prosperous days of the Tudors there was abundance of employment for the people, but unwillingness to labour. Evidence of this appears in the complaint of the House of Commons in 1376, which affirms that masters are compelled to pay their servants high wages to prevent them running away; that many of the runaways turn beggars and lead idle lives in cities and boroughs, and that others become cudgel-players, wandering in parties from village to village, but that most of them become sturdy rogues, infesting the kingdom with robberies. To remedy these disorders, the Commons proposed that no relief should be given to able-bodied labourers, either in towns or in the country, and that mere vagrants should be imprisoned till they consented to return home and work. Mercy, however, was mingled with punishment, and pains were taken to analyse the imposture and destitution which infested society, to punish the former and relieve the latter. As early as 1388 there appear to have been endeavours to relieve and settle the poor: the 12 Rich. II. c. 7. provides that impotent beggars shall not leave their place of abode, or, if such place is unable to maintain them, they may remove to some other place in the hundred, or to the place of their birth. The tenor of this Act shows that the district where the beggars finally settled was bound to maintain them, and that the legislature had two centuries previously anticipated the principle of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the destitute.

But the celebrated Act of Elizabeth was a great consolidatory and amending enactment. It was not resorted to without necessity and without a long experience of the inadequacy of any less comprehensive measure. The

voluntary system was tried, and at first parishes were only compelled to maintain their poor, and this they were free to do by the aid of alms and donations obtained by the gentle exhortations of ministers and the charitable persuasions of bishops. But it was soon found that neither sufficient funds could be obtained by these means, nor would the collectors of the poor render or give account of the sums they received. After this double failure the bishops were empowered to commit collectors to jail until they settled their accounts; and persons who obstinately refused to give weekly to the poor were bound over to appear at the quarter sessions, and the justices to try "gently to persuade and move them," or, if still obdurate, the justices might tax them a weekly sum, and commit them to prison until paid. Other Acts followed, and the long reign of Elizabeth is filled with statutes for supplying the deficiencies or correcting the errors of former poor laws. At length the great measure of 1603 appeared, concentrating the fruits of two centuries of experience, and forming for two centuries after the groundwork of our poor-law administration. It forms an epoch in the progress of British civilisation, by vigorously grappling on just principles with one of the most perplexing embarrassments in the progress of the community. Vagrancy is dealt with, and mendicity prohibited; but the aged, the impotent, and really distressed are relieved by a compulsory rate, the disbursement of which is vested in overseers and churchwardens chosen by those locally interested in the expenditure. The Act of Elizabeth was a model of judicious municipal administration and of the objects that fitly pertain to it; it has been, in our estimate, a great instrument of police, not less than of humanity, and of that internal order and quiet for which the country has been preeminently distinguished.

Placed on an enlightened and durable basis, the poor laws formed only one of the great national services rendered under the long and vigorous reign of Elizabeth. Her unshaken adherence and firm government of nearly half a century gave stability to the Protestant Reformation, and contributed to aid the reformed worship in France and the Netherlands. Free scope was given to commerce, which was further aided in its prosperous career by the encouragement given to shipbuilding, navigation, and maritime discovery. The glory of these, with other triumphs in learning and literature, were doubtless shared by the sovereign with illustrious contemporaries whom her favour or discernment enlisted in the public service or attached by her patronage. The Cecils, Nicholas Bacon, Shakspeare, Spenser, Raleigh, Ascham, Drake, Frobisher, and Gresham, are a few of the distinguished names which in statesmanship, commerce, navigation, and letters, shed lustre on this brilliant era.

The absolute character of the government cooperating with superior intelligence and public spirit, contributed to the energy and directness of its administration. The queen's reign was eminently and uninterruptedly popular, and the people reconciled to arbitrary power by its practical benefits. Ostensibly the law was supreme, but hardly any law was paramount to the will of the sovereign and her ministers. The chief attributes of a feudal monarchy continued to be fully exemplified under Elizabeth, and as the fatal inheritance descended to the succeeding dynasty, a brief outline of its principal executive machinery may not be unsuitable.

The most ancient instrument of judicial violence was the Court of Star Chamber, whose members held their places during the pleasure of the crown, with power to fine, imprison, and corporally punish at pleasure. The

sovereign, if present, was sole judge, and the jurisdiction of the court extended to all sorts of offences, as contempts and disorders, that lay out of the reach of the common law. The Court of High Commission was a further irresponsible tribunal. Its vengeance was directed against the undefinable crime of heresy, and, in the hands of the narrow-minded Whitgift, was a fearful engine of persecution. Martial law was still more sweeping and violent in its procedure. Whenever there was any public disturbance the crown resorted to martial law, and during that time any one might be punished as a rebel or abettor of rebels, whom the lieutenant of a county or his deputy pleased to suspect. In one of her proclamations, the queen orders martial law to be used against those who imported forbidden books, and prohibits the questioning of her officers for their arbitrary punishments, "any law or statute to the contrary notwithstanding." In addition to this instrumentality arbitrary imprisonments were frequently resorted to by the crown; merely by the authority of a warrant of a secretary of state or privy councillor, any person might be imprisoned in any jail, during any time ministers thought fit. In suspicious times the jails were filled with suspects, who were sometimes thrown into dungeons, loaded with irons, and not unfrequently tortured to extort confessions.

Against these enormities the subject had no redress: neither judge nor jury dared to acquit when the crown was bent on a conviction. Both were the creatures of the ministry; and as the practice was once common of fining and imprisoning jurors at the discretion of the court, for finding verdicts contrary to the directions of its vassal judges, it is obvious juries afforded no security to the liberties of the people.

Even the Parliament was a feeble bulwark against

royal despotism. The crown had so many indirect sources of income, that it was almost independent of the Commons, and the ordinary resource of stopping the supplies was little check on its authority. Queen Mary as well as Elizabeth increased branches of the customs merely by an order in council. If levies were wanted for foreign service, Elizabeth compelled the counties to raise soldiers, to arm and clothe them, and convey them to embarkation seaports at their own charge. By the practice of Purveyance the sovereign might victual not only her court, but her fleets and armies, at the cost of suffering individuals, not regularly taxed, but marked out for oppression. By the Court of Wards the queen obtained possession of the estate during the minority of the heir; and had authority to dispose of the heir or heiress in marriage. The arbitrary imposition of embargoes, the occasional levy of ship money, the forbidding the sale of particular commodities, and the granting of patents and monopolies for the exclusive manufacture or vend of wares, formed other sources of revenue wholly beyond legislative control. Lastly, royal proclamations continued as omnipotent as under Henry VIII. when parliament itself gave the notable finish to its jurisdiction by declaring them equivalent to laws.

Further elucidations of the civil freedom of the sixteenth century seem hardly requisite. Poetry has thrown a dazzling hue over times which mainly afford only the useful lesson which Sismondi has eloquently inculcated *, namely, — to avert by our efforts, if possible, the return of them. Elizabeth's government was virtually an absolute monarchy, exercised under the semblance of prerogatives, and which prerogatives, though irregularly

* History of the Italian Republics.

indulged by some of her predecessors, were certainly contrary to *Magna Charta*, the statutes of the Edwards, and antecedent laws of the constitution. The last of the Tudors, like the first, might plead ancient maxims in her favour; but hardly less ancient laws were against them, and it was the conflict between statutes and royal precedents that produced those ulterior revolutionary struggles, in which the new order of the Commons followed the Church and the Nobility in its endeavours to limit the pretensions of the chief magistrate.

Although Elizabeth's government was despotic, it did not possess an efficient police, an ascription sometimes applied to that form of rule. In consequence of the transition from slave to free labour, and the dissolution of the religious houses, the country, as already observed, was overrun with thieves and vagabonds. A magistrate, writing in 1596, states, that in Somersetshire only, forty persons had been executed in a year for robberies and other felonies, thirty-five burnt in the hand, thirty-seven whipped, and one hundred and eighty-three discharged, most of them desperate miscreants, obstinately idle, and of abandoned character.* Other counties were in a worse situation, the same report stating that there were at least three or four hundred vagabonds in each county who lived by theft and rapine. Their numbers intimidated the justices of the peace, who, after sentencing depredators to merited punishment, interfered to stop the execution of their sentences, from a dread of the vengeance of their confederates in crime.

The social aspects of the Tudor age, especially the Elizabethan portion of it, are generally familiar and need

* *Eden's State of the Poor*, vol. i. p. 111.

only to be glanced at. Before the Reformation the education of both sexes was mostly in the religious houses, and the manners it induced in the family circle were strict and formal. A haughty reserve was affected by the old, and an abject deference exacted from the young. Sons when arrived at manhood used to stand uncovered and silent in their father's presence, and daughters, though women, were not permitted to sit or repose themselves otherwise than by kneeling on a cushion.* Something like a want of natural affection has been attributed by an Italian traveller of the fifteenth century. According to him, it was the custom of parents to apprentice out both boys and girls, at seven or eight years of age, for seven or nine years, taking the children of others in turn. This was done, he says, "to improve their manners and better to teach them."† This system was relaxed under Elizabeth, when ladies began to be instructed in graceful accomplishments, in music, dancing, and the useful arts.

The extension of commerce and more frequent intercourse with the Netherlands and Italy awakened a taste for higher refinements, and a disposition not to be satisfied with the feudal barbarisms, meagre fare, and miserable accommodations of a past generation. Induced by the political quietude of the times as well as their humbled position, the nobility began to abandon their dungeon retreats, and seek mansions of greater elegance and convenience. They removed the martial fronts of their castles, environed them with parks and pleasure grounds, rendering the whole more agreeable and commodious. Lower than this architectural improvements did not descend under the Tudors. The houses of the gentry con-

* Henry's Hist. of England, vol. xii. p. 353.

† Travels in England, A. D. 1500. Printed by the Camden Society.

tinued to be thatched buildings, composed of wood; those of the peasantry were slight frames prepared in the forest and covered with clay. In towns, houses were constructed mostly of the same materials, bricks being yet too costly for general use.

In diet and the enjoyments of the table the advances had been considerable. Under the Tudors the chief fruits and esculent herbs were introduced, as melons, apricots, currants, salads, cabbages, turnips, and hops. Lamb and other delicate meats began to be partaken of. There were several courses, and each had its peculiar condiment. A dessert of fruit, jellies, and spices, was not uncommon. There, however, still existed the great drawback in the dietary, that all except the most opulent were limited to salted meat a great portion of the year. This arose from the rudeness of agriculture, and its inadequacy to provide a nutritious winter food for cattle.

In the accomplishments of education and learning, the ancient languages and writings obtained the principal attention. In a greater degree than the classics, however, theological studies were paramount in importance, from the engrossing interest of religious controversies under the later Tudors. Italy was the great centre of attraction on which all eyes were fixed, not only as the seat of ecclesiastical supremacy, manufacturing industry, and commercial riches, but the home of the revival of the arts and leading models in all tasteful and intellectual pursuits.

A significant feature of progress is the commencement of the amusements of the theatre, which indicates the rise of more literate and sedentary tastes. The earliest patent for acting the regular drama is dated in 1574, and such was its rapid progress that in the beginning of the next century fifteen licensed theatres were open. In place of the old mysteries and moralities, founded on scriptural

subjects, plays were performed, having plots based on the incidents of history and social life. In this direction the genius of Shakspeare and of his contemporaries, Jonson, Massinger, Marlow, and Ford, gave an enduring interest and attraction.

Popular sports continued coarse, but invigorative. The higher ranks amused themselves with hunting, hawking, and archery; the lower, with pitching the bar, racket, quoits, and leaping. Baiting of animals and the making of deafening noises with bells, trumpets, and drums, were the delight of all classes, from the maiden queen to the meanest of her lieges. Upon the whole, it seems to have been a joyous age, but rough and reckless, indicated both by its pastimes, and the character and number of its criminal offences. The taste for good cheer was especially rife, and was no doubt stimulated by the novelty and variety of the viands with which commerce and freer intercourse among nations had familiarised the people.

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS TO THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

Aboriginal Superstitions of the Island.—Antiquity and wide Diffusion of Druidism.—Introduction of Christianity; rapidly diffused on the Ruins of Paganism.—Apostolic Age.—Early Divisions of the Church.—Supremacy of the Roman Pontiff.—Influence of Spiritual Centralisation.—Corruptions of the Papacy.—Kings the first Protestants; their rising against Papal Claims.—Decline of the Papacy.—Sale of Indulgences under Leo X.—German Reformation.—Beginning of the Reformation in England.—Severance from the Roman See.—Dissolution of the Religious Houses.—Coverdale's Bible.—Extent of the Reforms under Henry VIII.—Benefits and Drawbacks of the Reformation.

THE religious changes of the island present a series of remarkable vicissitudes. Druidism is buried in the night of time and almost too obscure for retrospection, but we may catch some glimpses of this mysterious worship singularly illustrative of the history of mankind. At a remote period it seems to have been widely diffused in Europe, and to have been the pervading superstition of its first inhabitants. Of its derivation from the East there appears strong probability. The more searching and minute the inquiries which have been made, the closer the analogies appear between the institutions of the Druids and those of the oldest states of antiquity. Strong affinities have been traced between the Etruscan, or aboriginal dialect of Italy, and the Celtic, Persian, Sanscrit, and other ancient languages. Mankind clearly appear to have had a common origin, to have spread over the earth from one source, carrying along with them more or less of one

primitive faith, arts, and civilisation. Remains of pyramidal and palatial structures, of towers and mounds, are discernible almost everywhere in the New and the Old World. The most enduring traces of every people are their tombs; and the temples and sepulchral monuments of the remotest date and in every country are found to possess, and to have been apparently formed and derived from, a common type,—to have a kindred resemblance. What are the pyramids of Egypt and Mexico, or the towers of Hindostan, the barrows and tumuli of Siberia and our own island, or the gigantic ruins explored in Central America, but heaps of earth or stone intended for religious rites, or in honour or for the preservation of the dead? They differ in some respects, as, for instance, the towers of Celtic-Gaul are square; but this divarication does not seriously impugn the likelihood of a common origin and uniformity of design. In general structure and probable purpose there are striking conformities, indicative of the same end and paternity of origin. The magi of the Persians, the gymnosophists of the Hindoos, Chaldaeans, and Assyrians, and the priests of Mexico, were the Druids of their respective nations. The Irish claim to rank among the oldest of the European communities; their history exhibits a cadency into barbarism from a remote and superior civilisation; their aboriginal lineage is most free from admixture with the Gothic races; and it is a fact that the term "Druid," which is only the old name for priest or philosopher,—once united in their functions,—is still used to designate the sacerdotal order in the Celtic translation of the Bible of Ireland.

The traces of Druidism are almost everywhere visible. It was the primitive, and apparently the first catholic worship of mankind; and vestiges of its remote but indestructible elements may still be remarked in that

venerable household accompaniment, the almanack. The names of the days of the week, our Sunday and Monday, are derived from the Druidical idolatry of the sun and moon. Our poetical mythology, our fairies, Pucks, satyrs, and other fanciful creations, are the personification of the ancient British adoration of woods, mountains, and rivers. Nor are our popular sports and anniversary usages without corresponding analogies. The ceremonies of All-Hallowmas, the bonfires of May-day and Midsummer-eve, reverence for the mistletoe, and other customs of the rural part of the kingdom,—all testify to the days of Druidism, and are remnants of its grim ritual, surviving in the popular traditions. They also evidence its eastern origin; for it is well known that fire, the mistletoe, and the oak formed objects of great adoration in the East.

Such, in general, were the opinions of the late Reuben Burrow, a remarkable Yorkshireman of the last century, little known, but of extraordinary acquirements in almost every branch of knowledge. Long resident in India, he had opportunities for investigating the question on the spot; and the results of his inquiries may be found in the early volumes of the "Asiatic Researches." According to him the Druids were Indian philosophers, who had emigrated to the West. Our famous monument of Stonehenge he held to be one of the temples of Budha. Some of the Welsh antiquaries have arrived at a similar conclusion, and trace their British ancestors to the island of Ceylon, the great seat of Buddhism. The dress of the Druid was oriental, white, open and flowing, and to which the disguise used by the Rebeccaites in the camisado insurgency of the principality a few years since seems to have borne a resemblance.

Analogy derived from similarity of religious dogmas and ethical precepts afford the strongest proof of inter-

mingling superstitions. Of all the elements constituting a people, these are the least extinguishable ; and, tried by this test, strong proofs are afforded of the oriental descent of the Druids. Their leading maxims embody much of the existing faith and practice of the Hindoos and Chinese, which are known to have subsisted unchanged for upwards of twenty centuries. Rapin has given several of the traditional maxims of the Druids, but it does not appear upon what authority. From the tenor of their ethical precepts, and various correspondences in polity, popular usages, and monuments, strong evidence appears of the oriental origin of the Druids. But the question then occurs—how did they come? How did the sages of India or Persia find their way to the British isles, and into France, Spain, and Portugal? These are historical chasms that cannot be filled up. We might as well ask how the crocodile, hyæna, or rhinoceros came to be denizens of Europe. We cannot tell, but we know it happened, because we find their remains as well as those of the altars of the Druids. There is a power of diffusion in nature wholly inscrutable, but not on that account non-existent. The spread of plants and seeds is wonderful, but it happens. So is that of birds and beasts, and creeping things of all kinds. People often express surprise how mice, crickets, beetles, and other vermin find their way into newly-built houses. The common house-fly, the swallow, and other winged visitors—whence come they? whither depart? They are not easily traced, but their changes and migrations are facts cognisant to observation; and we can only say, with Hamlet, that Nature has mysteries unknown to our philosophy. The settlement of the Eastern magi in Europe seems not an impossible occurrence. The continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and probably America, were once conterminous,

and two ways were open for immigration from the distant East. There was a communication by land and by sea; they might have been navigators along the coasts of the Mediterranean, or pedestrians throughout, travelling along the shores of the Caspian round Mount Caucasus, and descending into Europe from Lower Asia. Probably the Phœnicians, who were among the earliest of merchant-rovers, assisted their flight, and became commingled with them; a likely supposition, since the Etruscan literature and language has been identified by Betham with the Iberno-Celtic, and both found to be Phœnician.

However this may be, one thing respecting them is unquestionable, namely, that wherever the magi or Druids settled, they acquired the wonted ascendancy of superior intellect. They became the teachers, magistrates, and rulers of the people. It was only by forcibly extirpating the sanguinary superstition on which their influence was founded that the Romans were enabled to establish their authority in Britain. The public religion then became compounded with Paganism, with the worship of Jupiter, Juno, Mars, and other deities of the heathen mythology. Under this mixed superstition the island continued till the introduction of Christianity, which formed the next revolution in the national faith.

Neither the first introduction nor early progress of Christianity can with certainty be ascertained. The late Bishop Burgess inclined to the opinion that St. Paul visited the island, but this conjecture rests on very doubtful authority. After the arrival of this energetic propagandist at Rome little is known of his history; whether he extended his mission to Spain, Portugal, or Britain, was crucified, died naturally, or ended his days in a

Roman dungeon. Nor is there much better authority for the mission into this country of St. Peter, or even of that Apostle ever reaching Rome, though his alleged mission to Rome constitutes the apostolic presumption upon which the Papacy is founded.* At the first invasion of the Saxons in the middle of the fifth century, Christianity was found generally prevalent, mixed up with the unextinguished remnants of Druidism. About the same period the mission of St. Columba in Scotland, and of St. Patrick in Ireland, had succeeded in converting their respective populations to the Christian faith. The Saxons were Pagans, worshippers of the warlike deities Thor and Woden, and held in contempt the humility and peacefulness of the new worship. But a remarkable incident has been transmitted, which led to the speedy conversion of these fierce invaders. It is related that Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII., passing through the streets of Rome, was arrested at the market-place by the sight of some young slaves from Britain who were publicly exposed for sale. Struck with the brightness of their complexions, their fair long hair, and the beauty of their forms, he eagerly inquired to what country they belonged; being told that they were "Angles," he commiseratingly said, "They would not be *Angles*, but *Angels*, if they were but Christians." Perhaps no play of words was ever indulged in a spirit of purer benevolence or attended with more important consequences. After reaching the tiara the pontiff remembered his early impressions, and despatched St. Augustine with forty monks to fulfil his cherished design. This mission was signally successful. Ethelbert, king of Kent, who was chief of the federative union of the Heptarchy, was the first con-

* Haweis's History of the Church of Christ, vol. i. p. 29.

vert; his queen, Bertha, was already a Christian princess, and her example may have hastened the determination of her husband. Before the ensuing Christmas 10,000 Saxons had been baptized. As this was not an age of self-judgment and individual independence, men bowed to authority; the conversion of a prince was the conversion of his people, and in a very short time, without violence or bloodshed, the new faith was generally established. No greater changes were made than indispensable, and the pre-existing superstition facilitated the introduction of Christianity; the Pagan temples here, as they had previously been at Rome, being consecrated for Christian worship, and the festivals, heretofore kept in honour of heathen deities, and dear to the populace, were dedicated to the saints of the new promulgation.

The new faith planted was the Catholic one of the Papacy. At this early period Christianity had undergone many trials and transformations. The first epoch of its existence was the apostolic age, when it had no support, no aid or countenance save in the humility, purity, and zeal of the first disciples of its founder. With the temporal authorities of the earth it had no connection, nor derived from them any power or influence; neither were its doctrines maintained and propagated by any regular or ordained priesthood. Its weakness was the shield and foster-parent of its infancy. No established interest, belief, or order felt endangered by so humble and obscure a competition. Under this neglect of the authorities it ultimately triumphed over or became incorporated with them. But the Churches of the early Christians, it is manifest from what we read of them in the Acts of the Apostles, by no means answered the modern understanding of a national faith or pervading belief of an entire community. They were limited

societies of men united by a common religious sentiment, who met for worship, not in a chapel or temple, but perhaps in the room or dwelling of a fellow believer. There were then no episcopal ordination, nor appointment, perhaps, beyond the imposition of hands by some of the itinerant evangelists. The most apt preached. No surplice, gown, mitre, or cassock had been introduced. A plain man stood up in his common garb to deliver an exhortation, or to read portions of the Scriptures. Such was the simplicity of primitive Christianity ; it was congregational, and approximated to the voluntary or independent mode of worship.

Deviations from this initiative standard had a twofold origin. First, they were either the natural consequence of the spread of the Gospel, or resulted from the laudable endeavour to improve the Christian model, to infuse into it greater purity, perfection, and influence. The first converts were made among the humbler classes ; afterwards the higher orders were incorporated, till at length all who were distinguished in society by riches, title, or station were brought within the fold. An entirely new organisation was the consequence of this triumph. Places of worship more magnificent and capacious were sought to be established ; in lieu of an obscure dwelling or conventicle, churches and cathedrals were aspired to. Nor would the former description of preachers suffice. Illiterate and indigent men were held unsuitable instructors for the affluent, educated, and learned.* Hence arose the sacerdotal order, including a gradation of teachers adapted to the different classes of the community. Dis-

* Conformably with these outlines of progress and adaptation, is Dean Milman's just remark, that, "Christianity takes its specific character from the civilisation with which it is connected."

cipline among the clergy became the next and indispensable condition, when the ecclesiastical order had become numerous. How was this to be maintained? By the introduction of ranks and degrees, by establishing the relation of inferior and superior among the priesthood. It thus followed that the hierarchy of the Church was quite as inseparable from its expansion as the feudal tenures from the territorial inundation of the German nations. Both involved a principle of order, subordination, and supremacy. They were nearly contemporary in origin, and alike unavoidable; one for the spiritual government of the people, the other for the culture and division of the land. For the support of the baronial proprietor rents or services were appropriated; for the heads and pastors of the Church tithes, dues, and endowments.

A further consequence of the wide diffusion of evangelical truth was a diversity of religious sentiment. For the maintenance of uniformity of belief a spiritual head or government, an appellate and final jurisdiction, would be requisite. In the early ages of the Churches, the apostles were appealed to to settle conflicting interpretations; next synods and councils; afterwards an infallible pontiff. The last was a happy conception of the same nature, and justified by the same necessity as sometimes palliates the introduction of despotism for the prevention or termination of civil anarchy. Already great dissensions had prevailed. Our own country at the close of the fourth century was violently agitated by the heresy on original sin and free-will promulgated by Pelagius, a Welshman, and Celestius, a Scotchman. Nearly contemporary with this, the East was convulsed by the great Arian controversy on the consubstantiation, or separate and unequal constituents of the Trinity. In addition there were minor topics of agitation and division; —

as on the observance of Easter, whether the festival might be kept on a week-day, provided the fourteenth moon fell on that day, in lieu of Sunday. Also, as regarded the *tonsure*. Upon this point the Eastern and Romish Churches were long divided; the former maintaining that the monks ought to shave their heads upwards from the forehead in the form of a crescent, while the latter held that the hair ought to be worn round the temples in imitation of a crown of thorns. Unimportant and even ridiculous as these trivialities may appear, they were manifestly not more so than many topics of existing theological controversy,—as the offertory, bowing to the East, the use of the surplice, burial and baptismal rites. But in the early ages the disputants were in earnest; they esteemed them vital, engaging the protracted deliberations and frequent assembling of councils. Among the last, divisions and conflicts were frequent; and, with other sources of disunion, established, as already remarked, the expediency of vesting in the see of Rome an authority without appeal for the settlement of all controversies in the bosom of the Church.

Besides the need of unity in the Church, may be mentioned, as a second cause of deflection from primitive Christianity, the attempt to improve its early institutes by greater purity and intensity of devotion. Hence arose the celibacy of the clergy and monastic vows. That men might exclusively devote themselves to God's service, it was sought to dissever them from secular pursuits, sympathies, and engagements. They were to be in the world, but not of it—unparticipant in its joys and sorrows, domestic cares, and public duties. The results of such interdictions were such as might have been anticipated. Forcibly to isolate us from our fellow beings only sharpens the appetite to mingle in their society.

Encumbered with the frailties of his nature, how can man aspire to the purity of angels? From aiming at unattainable perfection, he mostly recoils into lower depths of infamy. It thus happened among the English clergy so early as the Anglo-Saxon period of the Church. The prohibition of marriage gave rise to the general indulgence of concubinage, and the monasteries became the hotbeds of vice and licentiousness.

St. Dunstan attempted to extirpate these disorders, but we pass over his efforts, only remarking that this energetic prelate was the earliest of ecclesiastical reformers. Our aim thus far has been to glance at the character of primitive Christianity, at the deviations therefrom, and the urgencies in which they originated; to show that the decline of the apostolic institutions of the Church were the consequence of the expansion of the Gospel beyond its first prostrate and unrecognised condition; and that the hierarchy of the Church and papal supremacy were the results of universal diffusion. The farther history is studied the stronger becomes the conviction that all the revolutions it records are the offspring of uncontrollable necessities. Every vicissitude originates in some antecedent evil; the change is good in origin, gradual in progress, powerful in meridian development, and degenerate in age. What could be more stainless, meek, and lowly than Christianity in its first advances to mankind? It was infancy — guileless, unblemished, and unpretending. But as it advanced in years and strength, as it mingled with temporal interests, with the pursuits of ambition, power, and riches, its character was perverted. From a holy aspiration, pure and undefiled, it degenerated into an apparatus of worldliness. From being the handmaid of civilisation, it became the great obstacle to social advancement. From the laudable vocation of controlling

the passions of fierce and wicked men, of asserting human equality, and God's justice to all, its ministers degenerated into oppressors, and erected a vast superstructure of exclusiveness and spoliation.

Viewed historically only, and apart from its divine mission, Christianity is a wonderful story. Its humble beginnings in the East, contrasted with its meridian splendour in the West, are marvellous incidents. The ivy overspread the oak : powers and principalities were absorbed : the lowly Nazarene compassed in his embrace the fierce German, Saxon, and Dane. In England, at one period, the clergy are supposed to have possessed one-third of the soil of the kingdom. This was only one of their immunities. They claimed impunity for offences ; that they could do no wrong, and were exempt from the secular jurisdiction. They were the great functionaries of rule, justice, and diplomacy. Far more truly than the proudest of the Bourbons, they were the state, — grasping houses and land, honours, offices, and revenues. And this was only a provincial supremacy. Elsewhere was a more central and encompassing domination. The imperial sovereignty, the keystone of the ecclesiastical arch, was at Rome. Before this potentate all earthly powers were prostrate. When kings command subjects must obey ; but to the Roman pontiff princes were obedient. Their sceptres were in his gift. He could create and he could destroy, could elevate or depose : they were his footstool — frequently his football.

It is often remarked that power is founded upon opinion ; but this was never so completely exemplified as in the autocracy of the pope. The dominion of ancient Rome had a material basis in the courage and discipline of her armies, the energies of her generals, and in vast territorial resources ; but the strength of the Papacy con-

sisted not in these carnal auxiliaries. Its kingdom was not of this world ; yet never was the world more completely possessed and mastered. Neither was its power local or concentrated in the seat of authority. It resided not in the eternal city, whose inhabitants, wealth, or military prowess had long ceased to awe or inspire the respect of mankind. Repeatedly conquered and plundered, Rome had for centuries been little more than a ruin, thinly peopled, desolate, and despised. Yet she retained a mysterious preeminence, not the preeminence of the Cæsars ; it was not the sword but religious sentiment that governed nations. Upon the ruins of a temporal a spiritual empire had been established — an empire of faith, founded on veneration for Holy Church and the sanctity of its High Priest.

It has been urged by M. Guizot that the centralisation of power in the papal autocracy was favourable to the conservation of Christianity. Amidst the dissensions of the early Christians and the general confusion which followed the dissolution of the Roman empire, the existence of the Gospel seemed endangered. But truth, usages, and establishments of obvious utility often outlive every vicissitude. The Roman municipal institutions, and many of their laws, survived the shock of the barbarians — why not the Gospel ? Even errors, if once in the human heart, are often indestructible ; and Druidism and Paganism, as already instanced, still enter largely into the faith and practice of European communities. The Papacy may have strengthened and accelerated the spread of Christianity by extinguishing the divisions of the Church ; but that it was essential to its existence is a fact not so evident. The Gothic nations appear to have been the chief auxiliaries in the diffusion of Christianity, which never obtained a firm footing in

Rome itself till that city was taken and sacked by Alaric,
A. D. 410.*

There can, however, be no question that immense services were rendered by Roman unity in its early stages to European society. Not the least of these was its tendency to hasten the extinction of races, thereby lessening the frequency of petty wars and promoting the establishment of large nationalities. The religious concord it promoted, was the other great benefit it conferred.

Next to war, theological controversies have commonly been the most exciting and absorbing, yet of all disputes the least productive of substantial benefits to the community. They seldom refer to the fundamental dogmas of faith, but mostly to differences of ritual, ceremony, or other non-essential element of religious worship. While they continue, however, they supersede all other topics of discussion, fix public attention, and occupy almost the entire educated mind of the country. In consequence, science and letters, whatever ministers to the embellishment and material enjoyments of society, are neglected or undervalued. In lieu of an age of discovery and invention, of advancement in national strength, riches, and happiness, it becomes one of religious discord, of profitless wrangling, and domestic animosities.

For the averting of these distractions the polity of Rome was admirably suited. It left no scope for popular agitation. All that could give rise to doubt, dispute, or disagreement, was kept aloof and inscrutable. The oracles of God, like the mysteries of the Druids and the sacred mysteries of all ages, were only revealed to the select. From the uninitiated faith only, not judgment,

* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chaps. xxxi. and xxxvii.; also D'Aubigné's *Hist. of the Reformation*, book i. chap. i.

was demanded. It was an age of authority, not of mental independence—of belief, not of thought or investigation. Dogmas were enforced, not dilemmas propounded. As the text was hid, who could question the interpretation? Men were to believe, not to think; or if they did think or doubt, there was at least a supreme and infallible Church to determine.

These were the secrets of the peace of the Catholic world. The Holy Scriptures were not accessible to the people, nor even to the generality of the clergy; for it is a fact that Martin Luther, before he commenced his attack on the Church, and though a monk, had not seen the Scriptures for two years. Withholding them formed the corner-stone of the Papacy; unaided by the sacred oracles, its assailants were without authority to question its pretensions, to challenge its infallibility. And to this polity the Roman see still adheres, as the sheet-anchor of Catholicity. In Spain and other Catholic countries the Scriptures are withheld from the people; and the late pontiff, Gregory XVI., issued a bull against Bible societies.

The translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular languages, by which they were rendered generally accessible not only to ecclesiastics but to laymen, made an irreparable breach in the unity of the Church. The original authorities were referred to, conflicting interpretations arrived at, and hence arose the endless train of divisions and subdivisions—of Protestants first, then of Nonconformists and Dissent in never-ceasing variety. Whether this was an advantage to European society forms too conflicting and many-sided a question here to investigate. Our salvation may have been better secured; but as to temporal interests, the resulting advantage is not so incontestable. The Word of God is not cumulative, like the

arts and sciences. There it is, fixed and crystallised. All the publicity, all the study, all the theological strife, all the sectarian splittings imaginable can neither add to nor diminish—cannot substantially extract from it any additional truth, new social application, maxim, or invention applicable to the diversified and ever-changing condition of humanity. The Romanists seem to have made the most possible of the immutable instrument at their disposal. In their hands the Scriptures were the firm support of one faith, one ritual, one worship: they were the basis of spiritual and secular authority—the invisible talisman by which all the rampant interests of society were harmonised and subjected. For these ends and their perpetuation their ecclesiastical polity was admirably adapted. They allowed no one to inspect the title-deeds of the Church, to look into the original charter of their assumed dominion. The covenants of the lease were known only to themselves, upon which they promulgated their own gloss and commentary. Obedience was rigorously exacted, but dogmas, rites, ceremonies, secular powers and possessions, were held to be unquestionable and unimpeachable, and no mortal eye was allowed to withdraw the veil that concealed the sanctuary upon which they purported to be affiliated.

In this way was the peace of the Universal Church maintained for centuries. But nothing of human contrivance can endure for ever. Truth is light, and a ray of it will ever escape through some opening. The best compacted confederacies, those most united in principle and action, will dissolve, and contain within them the seeds of dissolution. Rivalries will ferment, diversities of opinion arise, collisions of interest occur. These had appeared in England long before the Protestant Reformation; the regal and ecclesiastical orders had begun to conflict, to be

jealous and antagonistic. The haughty Becket was the high-churchman of his day who volunteered the championship of his order, to make the spiritual paramount to civil authority. Henry II. resisted ; and the incidents of the memorable struggle form an interesting episode of national history.

Other causes beside jealousy and pride tend to break up great combinations of men. In every class are exceptions,—some more honest, shrewd, or independent than their colleagues. Every age has had its liberals of high degree ; men of note who did not entirely acquiesce in the high hand, bigot will, and tyrannous bearing of their order. Without such sheltering aid, the first adventurers in the cause of human emancipation would be prematurely crushed. In the apostolic age the evangelists were patronised and supported by Joseph of Arimathea. It was the giant arm of John of Gaunt that protected Wickliff,—the “Morning Star” of the Reformation,—emboldened him to challenge papal supremacy, and enabled him to do what he would not otherwise have dared, to stigmatise the Pope as Antichrist. The German reformer Huss had a stanch supporter in Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, and Martin Luther would hardly have ventured to treat so contemptuously the bulls of his Holiness had he not relied on safe shelter and protection from the elector of Saxony. Some of the early heroes in both England and Germany were, however, martyrs in the cause, perished in the flames, and their remains were ignominiously strewed on the Tees and the Rhine; but the winged words of truth to which they had given utterance, and to which they faithfully adhered, could not be conjured back.

It was, however, the great temporal powers of the earth who were the earliest to make a successful impression on the spiritual autocracy. Princes, as the chief suf-

ferers from Roman pride, exaction, and dictation, were the first to rebel. They were the first *Protestants*, not the theologians of England or Germany. But, educated in the Catholic faith and surrounded by its devotees, they only slowly opened their eyes to the enormity of priestly tyranny. It was the naked protrusion of the arm of flesh that revealed to them the cloven foot of the Papacy. It sought royal guards, armies, extended territories, and augmented revenues. Earthly things were coveted, blended with spiritualities, and the position of the Church inverted. After employing earth, as in the Crusades, in defence of heaven, it next sought to employ heaven in mastering the earth. Theocratic forms were used for mundane encroachments. The offerings of the faithful were dissipated in the luxuries of the Vatican, in war, and military pageants. Emulating princes in their crimes, the pontiffs lost their spiritual influence over them. The charm was dissolved that for centuries had ignominiously chained kings to the foot of the papal chair, and bursting their bonds they exclaimed, “Rome is become like us!” *

Other causes not so disinterested tended to weaken royal allegiance. The Papacy had never been a barren sceptre, but throughout Christendom a source of vast patronage, and of revenue derived from firstfruits, tenths, and Peter-pence. These the princes sought to share, if not to appropriate to themselves. In England in 1344 Rome was deprived of its patronage by the exclusion of foreigners from Church preferment; and the statute of *præmunire* interdicted the reception into the kingdom of any bull or edict infringing the rights of the crown. The conqueror of Crecy, Edward III., demurred to being

* D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation, book i. chap. vi.

the vassal of the Roman see, and refused the annual tribute, in which he was supported by the peers of the realm, who objected that feudal tribute was only due to those who could grant feudal protection. In France the papal annats were early abolished, but again restored by Francis I. in exchange for the right to nominate to bishoprics and the higher benefices. The princes of Germany obtained similar concessions, and in 1487 the entire empire resisted and defeated a tithe sought to be imposed by the pope.* In every direction a disposition was manifested to contract the power and exactions of the pontiffs, and to which their own factious divisions had doubtless contributed. Europe had been scandalised by a schism of seventy years from 1378 to 1449. At one period there were two, at another three popes, excommunicating, anathematising, and reviling each other. People were at a loss which to prefer, his Holiness of Avignon or his Holiness of Rome. The Council of Constance at length put an end to the unseemly brawl of the infallibles; but the remedy was hardly less damaging than the disease, by the precedent it established. It made the power of general councils paramount to that of the Papacy, and thereby weakened the obedience and faith of the Christian world in its appellate supremacy.

Waldo and the Albigenses in the twelfth century, and Wickliff and Huss a century or two later, may have laid the eggs, as Erasmus said they did, which Luther hatched; but it was kings and the pontiffs themselves who dealt the first heavy blows and great discouragement of Popery. Next to princes, men of genius evinced their contempt and hatred of its impostures. Erasmus held that if light were given the darkness would disappear; and his brilliant wit,

* Ranke's History of the Popes, introd. and chap. i.

ridicule, and Greek scholarship, then a rare accomplishment among the learned, made an indelible impression on the educated and superior classes. Dante, the father of Italian poetry, placed in hell the most powerful popes. In heaven he hears St. Peter pronounce his bitterest maledictions against his unworthy successors. Petrarch, Lorenzo Valla, and a whole legion of poets and learned men, denounced papal usurpations, and continued to denounce them till they were silenced by the patronage and classical blandishments of Leo X.

But something beyond the power of kings or quiet convictions of the rich and learned may be needful to the attainment of practical reforms. The masses had not been moved; for the command of this lever, appeals to a less elevated region were indispensable. For gaining this instrumentality, the vices of the clergy became the theme of popular reprobation by Church reformers. It was these that afforded the effective handle for assailing the colossal power of Rome. Like all overtopping dominations, the Church declined through internal maladies. Nothing else can undermine them. Who would venture openly to assail the ecclesiastical orders in their meridian greatness? Who would breathe aught against the pope and the monks, when they engrossed most of the power and riches, and the whole of the learning of the age? The very strength of the Church, however, was partly the cause of its humiliation, by lulling it into a fatal security. Confident in its Juggernaut power, it indulgently reposed in the persuasion that it could well afford to despise its humble and obscure assailants. Hence the first attacks were held to be too contemptible for notice. John Wickliff, who had translated the Scriptures, discredited the Holy See, and laid the train of the after convulsion, had lived and died in peace, from the infirmities of ex-

treme age, almost 100 years before the name of Protestant was heard of. The first murmurings of Luther were disregarded. When the disputes between him and the Dominicans on the sale of indulgences were reported to Leo X., the pontiff good-humouredly remarked, "Brother Martin has a fine genius, but these are only the jealous squabbles of monks." These squabbles, however, proved the first rattlings of the hurricane, and had overwhelming issues. A little neglect sometimes breeds serious mischief, and so the Church experienced. Had the ecclesiastical fabric been sound and firm, it might have confided in the equitable results of inquiry and discussion ; but worm-eaten and shaken, it had only the alternatives of reform or the rigorous enforcement of silence. It did neither effectively, and hence the catastrophe.

The results of great revolutions are seldom anticipated or intended by their authors. This was precisely the case with the Reformation. Neither Luther nor Henry VIII. aimed at the subversion of the Roman Church, only the curtailment of its perversions. It is likely that the hostility of the English king had its chief origin in his personal character,— his pride, indomitable passions, and arbitrary will. He disliked the supremacy of his Holiness, his resistance to the capricious divorce of his queens ; and perhaps the cupidity of the monarch, who inherited with the sceptre much of the commercial spirit of his predecessor, had been excited by the wealth of the clergy. But to the general faith and polity of the Papacy neither the English nor the German reformer was inimical, and of which there is ample proof in the doctrines and ritual of the new worships of which they commenced the foundation.

The great spiritual warfare that ensued had a singular

beginning, and partook more of the nature of a secular than spiritual impulse. An attempt to levy a church-building rate throughout Christendom formed the proximate cause of the Reformation. Leo X. was one of the three sons of Lorenzo Medici, of whom the father said the first was good, the second a fool, the third prudent. The third became Leo X., and made an accomplished, politic, and able pontiff. He was bad in morals, of doubtful orthodoxy, but of magnificent tastes; loved the fine arts, literature and science, classical learning and grandeur. His ambition was to erect one of the grandest triumphs of ecclesiastical architecture, the superb church of St. Peter at Rome. He wanted funds to complete the undertaking, and to raise them he determined to commence, on a large scale, the sale of indulgences.

This was not a new pretension of the Roman See; at least it was old as the Crusades. Absolutions from sin, or the power to redeem from purgatory by a punitive equivalent, had indeed always formed part of ecclesiastical discipline. It was derived from the practice of penance or atonement for offences by corporeal sufferance, and is not remotely different from the practice of our criminal law. A fine is imposed, or, if that cannot be paid, the body is made to suffer by punishment. "If you cannot pay in purse, you must," as the judges inform culprits, "pay in person." A similar alternative had been gradually introduced into the Catholic Church. The white sheet was reserved for poor sinners; but for the rich—in lieu of flagellation, a journey barefoot to Rome, or the mortification of carnal desires by abstinence—a sum of money was exacted as a peace offering to the offended justice of Heaven. A tariff of charges for such commutations was early prepared by the popes,—the earliest, probably, by John XXII.,—and of which there

are more than forty editions. According to this scale, every offence may be commuted for a pecuniary forfeit proportioned to its enormity or its degree of publicity, the charge increasing with the notoriety of the crime. Boniface VIII., the most aspiring of pontiffs next to Gregory the Great, went a step further. He fixed the charge for what was termed a *plenary* indulgence; that is, an acquittance in full for all transgressions to all who should present themselves at Rome. Great was the throng towards the eternal city to partake of this act of grace. Old men of sixty or seventy started from the remotest parts of Italy, Germany, Spain, and France; in one month 200,000 pilgrims visited Rome. All these strangers brought rich offerings. The papal coffers filled rapidly. The device was too gainful not to be further improved. The return of the jubilee was fixed at fifty, afterwards at thirty-three, and lastly at twenty-five years. Then for the greater convenience of purchasers, and for the greater profit of vendors, both the jubilee and the indulgences were made available in every place in Christendom. It was no longer necessary to stir from home. What others had been to seek beyond the Alps or the Apennines every one might now buy at his own door.

It is manifest, therefore, that Leo X. only followed the example of his predecessors in his mode of raising supplies. It was the abuse of a Church usage, not dissent from the dogmas upon which it was founded, that roused indignation. It was the indiscretion of the pontiff's agents which discredited his ways and means. One of the most notorious of these was Tetzel, a Dominican friar. He was then in the sixty-third year of his age, but still active and vigorous. Clothed in the garb of his order, his bearing was arrogant, his voice loud and im-

perious, his aspect imposing, his denunciations silencing and withering. To the theology of a monk he united the fierceness of a demagogue. But the qualities which made him most successful were a singular union of facetiousness and effrontery; dexterity in popular allusions, in the use of striking phrases, and in the apt embellishment of his mountebank oratory with those quaint and comic stories which most captivate the multitude. He profited largely by his commissionership. All his expenses were paid, and he had eighty florins a month, beside extra profits. But his habits were wasteful, licentious, and dissipated.

The opening of the sale of indulgences on a large scale, and with much stir, caused great excitement in the quiet cities of Germany. The dealers travelled through the country in handsome equipages, with outriders and attendants who spent a great deal of money. When the cavalcade approached a town, a messenger was forwarded to the magistrate. "The grace of God and of St. Peter is before your gates," said the envoy; and immediately all was commotion. The bells were set ringing; the clergy, municipal council, the trade-guilds with their banners, men, women, and children advanced with music, and bearing torches, to meet the indulgence-merchants. Salutations ended, the whole escort moved towards the church; the pope's bull of grace being borne aloft at the head of the procession on a velvet cushion, or on cloth of gold. The chief dealer followed, holding in his hands a great red wooden cross. The organ pealed, and loud music greeted the entrance of the pedlar-monk; the cross was placed on the altar, and the pope's arms suspended from it, and while it remained all the ecclesiastics and penancers of the place came daily to do it reverence.

After the cross had been elevated Tetzel ascended the

pulpit, and in charlatan style began to extol the inestimable value of his wares. The assemblage listened in mute wonder at the admirable virtues set forth. But for specimens of the monk's elocutionary fascinations reference must be made to D'Aubigné's History.

As already observed, the brokers, in their eagerness to do business, went beyond the letter of the papal commission. No preliminary condition of amendment, contrition, or repentance was required. It was these omissions which roused attention, and next provoked indignant opposition. Incensed at the shameless desecration, Luther was the first to impugn the irreverent traffic. He was then in the thirty-fourth year of his age, a professor of philosophy in the newly-founded university of Wittemberg, and celebrated for learning and eloquence. A good Catholic, he objected only to the mode in which Tetzel vended his commodities; but increasing in boldness, denied the efficacy of money in atoning for misdeeds. It was not, he argued, "external acts that made men righteous; but they must have righteous principles in the first place, and then they will not fail to live virtuously." In support of these views he put forth ninety-five propositions, which he offered to maintain in a public disputation; but the Church was too wily to give importance to him or his doctrine by accepting his challenge, and no one appeared to defend the denounced indulgences.

Very opportunely two circumstances had recently occurred which greatly aided the efforts of the intrepid German, and without which the Reformation itself might have been premature. Had the earlier attempts of the Lollards and Hussites been successful, it has been surmised* that a worse regimen than that of Popery might

* Macaulay's History of England, vol. i. p. 45.

have been inaugurated. This is possible. At this earlier period little knowledge was abroad, and hardly any means of attaining it. There were few books, and those costly, no literature, or science. Consequently Popery might then be adapted to the age, and all it was competent to appreciate. In the interval of nearly two centuries the lay classes of society had made considerable intellectual advances by frequent intercourse with foreigners. Classical learning, especially that of ancient Greece, had begun to be sedulously cultivated, and distinguished Englishmen had been wont to resort to the flourishing cities of Italy for science and educational culture. Henry VIII. was a learned and accomplished prince, and at the beginning of his reign warmly favoured the literary movement in which the celebrated Sir Thomas More, Linacre, Dean Colet, and Thomas Cromwell cooperated.

Nearly contemporary with these advances were the occurrence of the appliances to which allusion has been made. These were the invention of printing, and the use of the vernacular tongue in addresses to the people. By the former, copies of the sermons of Luther could be cheaply multiplied; and preaching in the German language brought him into direct communion with all classes of the community. The pope pronounced his writings heretical, excommunicated their author, and ordered them to be committed to the flames. This at once placed the two parties, the followers of Luther and the adherents of the ancient Church, in hostile array. Ejected from the Roman communion, and emboldened by the number and power of his supporters, Luther no longer hesitated to join issue with his opponent. He boldly declared the pope to be Antichrist, "the man of sin," and called upon all Christian princes to cast off his degrading and tyrannical yoke. When his own books

were burnt at Rome, he retaliated by burning the volumes of the canon law at Wittemberg in presence of the university and a throng of exulting spectators, who applauded the courageous defyer of the haughty despotism which for 1000 years had bestrode the Christian world.

These extraordinary proceedings doubtless were heard of in England, but obtained no countenance or encouragement. Up to this period the ancient worship maintained the ascendant in undiminished splendour. Cardinal Wolsey was the king's favourite minister, and the pope's legate in this country. This ambitious prelate, who himself aspired, aided by Charles V. of Spain, to be Roman pontiff, was the uncompromising defender of the ecclesiastical order. From the time of Wickliff attacks had been made on the Church; its exemption from the secular jurisdiction had been complained of, and the worship of images, relics, the Virgin, and other dogmas had been impugned, but no serious impression made on the hereditary faith of the nation. Its supremacy was unchallenged, and Henry VIII. during the early part of his reign implicitly acquiesced in all the arrogant pretensions of the Papacy. With the heresies of the German reformer he felt no sympathy. He wrote a book in defence of the sale of indulgences, which was presented in full conclave to his Holiness, who in gratitude honoured the royal author with the title of "Defender of the Faith;" a distinction proudly borne by successive monarchs, Papist and Protestant.

But accident wrought a sudden change in this display of worship and obedience. That accident was not the light emitted from Lutheran tracts, but that which radiated from the lustrous eyes of a beautiful maid of honour. The king wished to divorce Queen Catherine, to whom he had

been married eighteen years, and marry the lovely Ann Boleyn. The pope refused consent; Henry tried in vain to overcome his scruples, till at length Cranmer suggested that a divorce might be effected without the permission of the Roman See. Most acceptable counsel this to the impatient monarch, and most pregnant in results. First, it was the downfal of the magnificent cardinal; Cranmer, who was friendly to the new opinions, succeeding Wolsey, by which the small end of the reforming wedge was introduced. The new queen, too, inclined to Lutheranism, as she well might, it having paved her way to the throne. Great events followed. The authority of the pope in the kingdom was denied; the payment of firstfruits, tenths, and Peter-pence to the Holy See prohibited, and in 1534 the king was declared by act of parliament "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England," with a veto on the election of bishops, and the sole power to correct and reform heresies. The very next year the king asserted his spiritual supremacy with a vengeance, by executing the two illustrious men, Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher, who denied it.

The repudiation of the papal yoke left the government free to pursue measures of domestic policy undistracted by foreign interference, and the sceptre of supremacy soon made itself felt in another direction by an attack on monastic institutions, and which the refractoriness of the Benedictines to the new prerogative of the crown tended to provoke. Secretary Thomas Cromwell is represented to have had the chief hand in this, as in other reformatory proceedings, and a visitatorial commission, of which he was the head, having been appointed, evidence of the existence of very gross abuses was discovered. Entire convents were found wholly abandoned to luxury and licentiousness. The holy relics, which the people had

hitherto looked upon with profound veneration, were now exposed to their ridicule. At Hales, in Gloucestershire, there had been shown, during several ages, the blood of Christ brought from Jerusalem ; such a relic, it is easy to imagine, was highly prized by the credulous multitude. This sacred conserve was not visible to any one in mortal sin, till he had performed good works sufficient for absolution. At the dissolution the whole contrivance was detected: two of the monks had taken the blood of a duck, which they renewed every week ; they put it in a phial, one side of which consisted of thin transparent crystal, the other was thick and opaque. When any rich pilgrim arrived, they were sure to show him the dark side of the phial, till masses and offerings had expiated his offences, and then finding his money or his patience exhausted, they made him happy by turning the phial. Similar contrivances for imposing on the credulous may be found in all ages ; the people were then comparatively uninformed, therefore gross inventions answered the purpose.

The suppression of the religious houses occupied three years, and while in progress hopes were held forth that their sequestered revenues would be a substitute for taxes, for a better provision for the poor, and for the parochial clergy. But none of these promises were fulfilled. The commissioners were enriched, and some courtiers ; two or three new bishoprics founded, and a vast fund created for royal profusion ; but hardly any proprietary object of national utility was realised. The aristocracy benefited most by the change, obtaining not only the political power of the great abbots and other high ecclesiastics, but the chief portion of the abbey lands, with the numerous benefices and titles pertaining to them. In this way they partly recovered the prepon-

derance of wealth and social influence which their baronial ancestors had yielded to the Church.

The secularisation of Church property completed almost the severance from Rome which the royal divorce had initiated. The regular clergy formed the standing army of the Papacy, and the abbeys were so many well-provided fortresses for the maintenance of Roman influence in the different districts of the kingdom. The subordination of all monasteries to the provincials, the regularity of the obedience of these last to the general, and the constant residence of the general at the court of Rome, formed an uninterrupted chain of communication and authority, by means of which the commands of the supreme pontiff were conveyed to the humblest friar, with all the secrecy and despatch of military organisation. The dispersion of such a well-disciplined combination was indispensable to the progress of the Reformation. But this was not effected without encountering a pertinacious resistance. At the moment, the ecclesiastical confiscation was so unpopular as to cause revolts in those counties where the ancient religion most retained its influence. The people lamented the loss of the alms distributed by the monks. The ruin of grand edifices, the spoliation of the richest decorations, hitherto the pride of the neighbourhood, were keenly regretted. Every church contained relics or shrines, the objects of superstitious veneration. Many famed chapels were visited by pilgrims from distant lands. Every parish had its miraculous legends to deplore, doubtless the offspring of popular ignorance and the means of fraud, but endearing to the peasant the parochial church, the adjacent convent, and every locality over which tradition had strewed its hallowed tales. The people were most affected by the sight of the friars themselves

driven from their homes, and compelled to earn a livelihood in a world for which they were unfitted by long seclusion ; the vices of some, the uselessness of most, were forgotten in the common distress.

Only a slight provision was made for the sufferers. The superiors of the suppressed houses were promised pensions, which were irregularly paid. All the monks not twenty-four years old were absolved from their vows, and left to shift for themselves. The nuns were turned out without any allowance, save a common gown each. Another incident, very distasteful to the common people, was the curtailing of holidays, especially those during harvest. About the economical policy of this there can be little hesitation. The Catholic religion was very obstructive to industry. Neither labour nor capital could be efficiently productive. Idleness in the people, and dissipation in their spiritual guides, were predominant vices. This may be learned from the exhortations issued for reforming the parish clergy. Parsons, vicars, and curates are enjoined not to haunt taverns and alehouses, to refrain from drinking and riot, and from playing at cards, tables, and other unlawful games. In lieu, they are diligently to employ themselves in teaching the people in plain English their Paternoster, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Every three months the parish priest is directed to exhort his hearers not to repose their trust in the works of men's hands ; they are not to wander in pilgrimages, offering money, or tapers to burn before images or reliques, nor "to kiss or lick the same over," saying a number of beads not understood in such superstitions.

The reformers based their proceedings, as Christian reformers ought, upon the Scriptures. The Bible was referred to as the charter of authority. Its free circula-

tion constitutes the fundamental principle of Protestantism; and in obtaining this first of documents for the people they evinced their honesty and sincerity. It was for this purpose that a copy of Miles Coverdale's translation of the Bible into English was put into the hands of the king. Various opinions were expressed upon its merits, which induced Henry VIII. to order the bishops to peruse it. "After they had had it," says Dr. Burnet, "a long time in their hands, the king asked their judgment of it: they said, 'There were many faults in it, but no heresies.' Upon which Henry replied, 'In God's name, then, let it go abroad among my people.'" A more correct version was subsequently executed under the direction of Cranmer, and orders issued that every parish should procure one copy, to be chained to a pillar or desk in the choir of the church for all to read at their pleasure. The clergy were required to read a chapter every day, with an authorised commentary upon its interpretation. It was, however, of no use laying the Bible before the people, unless they were instructed in the art of reading it; that too was set about, and in the London diocese the clergy were required to instruct children in English reading.

Up to the present, the reform in England, unlike the contemporary movement in Germany, had been principally of a secular character. The king had removed the great obstacles to his own wayward appetites, in the denial of the papal jurisdiction, by which he obtained uncontrolled power in divorces, and in the prescription of the religious faith of his subjects. Other changes of great national interest had been made, though not in the first movement contemplated, in the transfer of property, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in the abolition of idolatrous worship; but it was principally the Pope that

had been quarrelled with, not Popery, whose leading dogmas remained unimpugned. Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper, Ridley, and Cromwell were, however, covertly bent on theological innovations; but the king to the end of his reign was what would be now considered, bating the papal renunciation, a good Catholic. In the famous Six Articles are comprised the royal faith, and that too dictated to the nation by act of parliament, namely, the real presence in the sacrament, refusal of the cup to the laity, celibacy of the clergy and inviolability of monastic vows, necessity of private masses, and of auricular confession. Denial of the first of these was punishable by burning, and no recantation was admissible, — a stretch of intolerance never indulged by the Inquisition, which always allowed to the recusant to recant once his errors. Upon the subject of purgatory, on which the practice of granting indulgences mainly depended, the king did not appear to have made up his mind, and in virtue of which dubitation he kindly left the people to form their own opinions. As regarded spiritual supremacy, his sentiments, however, were decided: he was resolutely opposed to an Italian pontiff, but had no objection to an English one in his own person, and fiercely exercised his divine vicegerency by repeatedly sending unhappy victims to the stake for denying his infallible constructions.

The severance from the Papacy was the commencement of the Church of England, though both the foundation and superstructure were more definitely the work of Henry's successors. The elements of the new national edifice, and their relation to the venerable faith they invaded, will form an after-subject for consideration; that which has been briefly attempted seems complete for the present. The chief causes have been indicated, that after three

centuries of struggle shattered the Popedom on the continent, and wholly ejected it from England. It certainly rallied after the first shock of its assailants was over, as great parties mostly attempt to do ; but the disintegration was thorough: Catholic unity was lost, and, as great powers once fallen have rarely a second advent, it is not again, with outspread wings, likely to overshadow Europe. Arrived at this issue, it may not be unsuitable to glance at the leading results of this memorable convulsion in European society, and try to present some of the prominent features favourable or adverse in the Reformation. The subject has already been briefly alluded to (Chap. IV.) in its relations to an earlier period of progress.

The radical weakness that undermines great establishments is their strength, their resistless sway, and the corruption, pride, and negligence which these irresponsible elements invariably tend to foster. In the lapse of ages Catholicism had become a degenerate worship. Beneficial to Europe during centuries of existence, it had, from unchecked prosperity, become a perverted faith. It was not what it had been or purported to be, but an imposition on mankind ; and in the maintenance of this imposition there was tacit concurrence in all ranks of the clergy, from the sovereign pontiff to the meanest friar. When young Luther, then an ardent papist, visited Italy, he was shocked at the hypocrisy he witnessed in the ecclesiastical orders. At the moment of the sacrifice of the mass the monks indulged in obscene jests and derisive blasphemies. In Rome, says Ranke, it was the characteristic of good society to question the truths of Christianity. Leo X. spoke of the history of Jesus Christ as a “fable,” though he remarked to Cardinal Bembo, “it had been a very profitable fable to them.” Myconius, who was long a monk, and afterwards a follower of Luther, testifies to the insincerity of his order. “The sufferings and merits of

Christ," says he, "were looked upon as an idle tale, or as the fictions of Homer." The consequence of this general inconsistency between sentiment and spiritual duties, was the universal debasement both of the people and their teachers; the former as the blind and despoiled victims of an idolatrous worship, and the latter as the infidel and demoralised agents of its executive administration.

But when any institution loses its purity and truth, the foundation that can alone support it in perpetuity has begun to be undermined. Every attack makes an impression. No advantage gained over it is ever lost. Every hostile approach becomes a lodgment from which the assailants are never entirely expelled. The seeds sown by Wickliff were never extirpated. Imbibing from the errors of the Papacy a vital warmth, they continued to germinate unobserved in its bosom till their expansion, 150 years after being planted, produced the Reformation. When a system is decayed, its end may be safely anticipated, but not the moment of dissolution, any more than the death of a man whose human constitution is impaired by age or infirmities. Dissolution is certain in both; not the time, which depends on accidental occurrences. In Germany the Reformation was hastened, but not produced, by the indecent sale of indulgences; in England the like result followed from the ungovernable passion of a self-willed king.

But the Reformation was inevitable had neither Martin Luther nor Henry VIII. existed. It was only the evolution and outward expression of causes that had been long at work in European society. Social maladies had reached a crisis, for which an ecclesiastical revolution was the only curative. For centuries the clergy had been declining in general estimation. The educated began to dissent from their doctrines; the populace were shocked

at their vices ; and all classes felt hurt at their inordinate wealth, their arrogance, and encroaching spirit. They had become a national grievance, in the abatement of which there was a concurrent interest from the prince to the peasant. One of their most unbearable immunities was exemption from criminal punishment. Had they been simple men, such irresponsibility might have been more tolerable, but their conduct evinced that they had fallen below the average level of human depravity. Yet while the Catholic superstition lasted, there was no possibility of punishing any crime in the clergy. The Church would not permit the magistrate to try the offences of her members, and she could not herself inflict any civil penalties upon them. Henry VIII. curtailed these pernicious exemptions, by depriving clerical murderers and highway robbers of the benefit of clergy. The privileges of sanctuaries, too, which afforded protection both to the clergy and laity, were abolished, and no one guilty of burglary or other atrocious crime was allowed to take shelter in a religious house. These were salutary judicial amendments, rendered justice more uniform, and lessened the influence the clergy had exercised over the minds of the people by the sanctity they had attached to everything sacerdotal, even to the extent of participating in the regal impeccability of never doing wrong.

Unquestionably the gain to the world was immense in getting rid of class immunities of this inordinate character, especially as the maintenance of them absorbed the chief fruits of industry, and their continuance fettered the expansion of the human intellect. But the emancipation of the mind was only partially effected by the Reformation. Toleration, indeed, has been a plant of slow growth. One is astonished at the inconsistencies of the early Reformers, that men could learn nothing from ex-

perience, could derive no useful lesson from their own illustrations. The cardinal points of Protestantism were resistance to established error, the fallibility of human judgment, and the omnipotence of truth. But immediately these opinions had made an impression, their most obvious applications were, by the promulgators themselves, interdicted. The idols of Popery were overthrown, to be replaced by others equally dogmatic and compulsory. Neither Henry VIII., Luther, nor John Calvin could brook contradiction. The celebrated Cranmer, the distinguished founder of the Church of England, eminently learned and sagacious above his contemporaries, was a persecutor. He rejected many papal doctrines, but would take no denial of his own Protestant interpretations ; burning without pity any unhappy creature who could not credit his favourite test of transubstantiation. However, a great principle, if not carried out, was opened for expansion by a future generation.

Three inestimable blessings were immediately and irrevocably secured by the Reformation. The irresponsible power of a despotic priesthood was broken ; the learned were brought into intellectual communion with the people, and taught to address them, as Luther was wont to do, in a language they understood ; and, lastly, the original documents upon which Christianity is founded were restored to them. The new versions of the Scriptures in the popular tongues consecrated the familiar languages of nations. The mysteries of theology were opened to laymen, and ceased to be the unchallenged interpretation of those interested in their maintenance. Neither was science without fruits. The same freedom that was salutary in spiritual inquiries was not denied to the researches of philosophy, morals, and literature. The universities were quite in as great need of purification from the profitless subtleties of the

schoolmen as the churches from the superstitions of the priesthood. Melancthon, who was only second in eminence to Luther, perceived this. "I desire," says he, "a sound philosophy; not those empty words to which nothing real corresponds. For only one system of philosophy can be true, and that must be the least sophistic, and pursue the right method."* These are golden words; their application became signally meliorative. In countries where religion was not cleared of its errors knowledge has made few or no advances. A Newton, Leibnitz, Hume, or Locke could not have lived and flourished in Spain or Portugal. Neither the true principles of natural science, laws, government, nor morals could be freely investigated. To the Reformation we are entirely indebted for the practical philosophy of life, for that philosophy which reveals the nature of man—his passions, and the best mode of controlling them—his happiness, in what it consists, and the means of attaining it. Learning under the Papacy was only conversant with words—apprehensive of the investigation of things, lest its own supremacy might be scrutinised. Like all flourishing despotisms, its permanency was identified with the servile, inert, and obstructive; not the bold, independent, and progressive.

A special gain to England was the early riddance of the spiritual supremacy of the Roman See. Unaided by this relief from foreign interference, both mental and social progress must have been slow and within narrow limits. But the direct corollary of the denial of this exotic pretension was the rendering the ecclesiastical subordinate to the civil authority of the realm, as a supplemental addition to the supreme duties of its chief magistrate.

That the material interests of Europe were advanced

* Heeren's Historical Treatises, p. 107. Talboys, Oxford.

by the religious concussion under consideration, hardly need be agitated. The vocation of the clergy, according to their own version, is to things spiritual, not temporal. How, then, could their ascendancy be favourable to productive industry? It was inimical in the Middle Age, as it still continues to be wherever they have a directing influence. It was chiefly the wars and intrigues of the Papacy that arrested the prosperity of the Italian republics. The Reformation was the foundation of the commercial and manufacturing greatness of Holland and the Netherlands, and subsequently of that of England. It was the same agitating convulsion that originated the most prosperous of the North American colonies. If the Reformation had had only the solitary issues of inducing men to read, think, and act for themselves, in lieu of continuing the puppets of an idle and dissolute priesthood, the moral and material consequences must have been incalculable. It is unnecessary, however, to resort to general or foreign illustrations. Our own country, where the secular revolution was most complete, affords the most convincing proof of the benefits reaped by the change. The long and glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth is a practical commentary on the great work commenced by her predecessors, and consummated by her own sagacious energies. Under this eminent princess a new-born impulse might everywhere be seen working out its religion, its legislation, its literature. Popery had created nothing, nor sought to create, but to repress. For every class of genius there existed, as Disraeli the Elder has remarked, nothing to copy; everything, to be great, had to find a beginning. In the drama, Shakspeare; in history, Raleigh; in philosophy, Bacon.

The services of the Reformation to literature are unquestionable. Controversy is itself a good; it is the

awakener of thought and the scatterer of instruction. Stagnant water corrupts ; but in motion, whether ebbing or flowing, diffuses sweetness, life, and fertility. Why did all the Catholic countries sink after the Reformation into literary insignificance ? Because their precautions against innovation, by crushing inquiry and discussion, enfeebled the general mind. Those mental games were prohibited in which intellect wrestles itself into vigour. On the contrary, the Protestant countries rose into literary preeminence. They admired and rewarded their polemic authors ; they opened a career to talent, and honoured its achievements. But enough has been urged on the favourable ; let us turn to the adverse. The triumphs of the New Generation of the sixteenth century have not passed unquestioned. Drawbacks have been enumerated which it is fair to recapitulate.

First, poetical sentiment was hurt ; old associations were disturbed ; the venerable oak planted by our ancestors, under whose shade they emerged from Paganism to Christianity — from ruthless barbarism to comparative civilisation — was scornfully treated, and despoiled of its noblest branches. But the tree itself, it may be replied, was no longer the same. It was not that pure and youthful plant, with promising germs and verdant foliage, which St. Augustine displayed to the wondering eyes of Bertha and Ethelbert ; but a fruitless and decayed trunk, rotten to the core, and fit only to be uprooted and cast into the fire to make room for a fresher and more wholesome vegetation.

Other and more serious objections have been urged, moral and theological. It has been contended * that pur-

* Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry, p. 158.

gatory is not so appalling as eternal punishment, which may be conceded ; but then purgatory originated the sale of indulgences. Auricular confession has been held to check secret vices. But surely a parental confessor is more natural and safer than priest or holy friar ! The use of statues and pictures encouraged the arts ; but not equally with the successful pursuits of industry and commerce, to which Popery was adverse. That Catholicism was favourable to a uniform calendar, weights, and measures may be granted ; but international peace might afford equal, and certainly desirable, facilities, now that steam and the electric fluid has created such unceasing intercourse.

CHAPTER VII.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Its illustrious Founders. — The Liturgy, Homilies, Book of Common Prayer, and Thirty-nine Articles. — The Canon Law. — Edward VI. and Queen Mary. — Queen Elizabeth as an Ecclesiastical Reformer. — Origin of Nonconformists and Puritans ; their Objections. — Hampton Court Conference. — Disputations with King James. — Parallelism between past and present Theological Differences. — Popular Delusions of the Elizabethan Age.

IN the preceding chapter has been described the vicissitudes of Christianity from the period of its introduction to the Reformation. It is manifest, from this retrospect, that the Christian mission, in its first aspects, appealed to the faith and moral sympathies of mankind unconnected with the institutions of sect or priesthood, temporal ascendancy or possessions. In this humble pre-

sentment, divested of pretensions that could alarm the jealous apprehensions of established authority, and aided by inherent claims, it rapidly acquired an unrivalled dominion over the hearts of men, and became the predominant power of the earth. But incorporated with secular interests, the foundation was laid for endless corruptions of the primitive dispensation, and perversion to objects of human selfishness and ambition. These deviations from the original standard of belief and practice produced centuries of theological agitation, consummated by the mighty religious movement of the sixteenth century, which dissolved the unity of the Romish Church, and severed from papal supremacy some of the most powerful states of Europe.

Amidst this convulsion the Church of England originated. It is the eldest of the free churches that revolted from the Catholicism of Rome, commencing in the denial of the papal supremacy by Henry VIII.; but it was not till the next reign that the theology of Protestantism really began to be introduced. Under King Henry innovations had been limited to the sovereignty of the Church and its temporalities, but under Edward VI. a new doctrinal worship was sought to be raised on the basis of the ancient religion. This was the vital commencement of the existing liturgy and ecclesiastical establishment, of which the chief founder was Archbishop Cranmer, assisted by the zealous reformers, Bishops Hooper, Ridley, and Coverdale. The serial changes rapidly and energetically introduced by these eminent prelates require to be briefly noticed before either the foundation or superstructure of the Anglican Church can be correctly understood.

.. The first stone of the new episcopal fabric consisted of

the publication, or at least a new version, of the "Book of Homilies" or sermons, under the direction of Cranmer; to be read to their congregations by such incumbents of parishes as might not be qualified to compose discourses of their own. These were not very favourably received, a written homily being felt to be a drowsy exhibition compared with the show and animation of the former worship. The reading of some of the priests was indifferent, and, according to Latimer, "they did so hawk it and chop it that it were as good for the people to be without it for any words that could be understood." It gave rise, however, to the general use of written sermons in place of the former practice of extemporary declamation.

The next great undertaking was the preparation, in place of the Latin Mass Book, of the "Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments." The new book contained little that was not in the Mass Book, but was distinguished from it by the addition of the Litany and the omission of many forms held to be superstitious, and by its being throughout in the English language. The Prayer Book was sanctioned by parliament, and ordered to be used by all ministers in the celebration of divine worship.

Nearly contemporary with these changes were other innovations. The statute against the marriage of priests was repealed; the laity in common with the clergy were admitted to the sacramental cup, and the doctrine of auricular confession given up, confession to God or the Church being held sufficient.

The most arduous achievement remained, namely, the exposition and settlement of the doctrines of the new Church. In the opinion of some these ought to have

been the first consideration ; but Cranmer thought otherwise, and adopted a more politic proceeding. He first got rid of Gardiner, Bonner, Heath, and Day, stanch adherents of the old learning, and replaced them on the episcopal bench by reform prelates, to whom he submitted the new articles of religion. They were proceeded with in 1551, and finished by the beginning of the next year, when they were published by the royal authority. These articles were forty-two in number, and did not differ in any material point of doctrine from the present Thirty-nine Articles.

A digest and revision of the Canon Law, applicable to spiritual courts and offences, completed the cycle of ecclesiastical meliorations. It is to the learning, sagacity, and energy of Cranmer that the accomplishment of this arduous labour may be attributed. It was translated into Latin, and forms an entire body of ecclesiastical law, drawn up under fifty-one titles or heads. But this celebrated code never became the law of the land, it never having received the sanction of the royal authority. For this failure of legal validity various reasons have been assigned ; among others that the nation, especially the great men of it, could not endure ecclesiastical discipline. Some of its enactments indeed were severe. Denial of the truth of Christianity was punishable with death. Seduction was punishable by excommunication and forfeiture, adultery by imprisonment or banishment for life.

These great ecclesiastical reforms were all effected during the five years of a regency government. Edward VI. died a minor, and it was under his nominal sway that the Protestant fabric of the Anglican Church was founded and reared. It was a noble work, and did honour to the zeal and abilities of the distinguished churchmen by whom it was chiefly accomplished. In the tragical

interlude of the next reign the new establishment was suspended, and the old worship temporarily restored ; but the insane violence of Queen Mary's proceedings really helped to strengthen and forward the Protestant cause. Her torturings, burnings, and bloody sacrifices irretrievably ruined Popery in the popular estimation, and left on the national mind an impression of its sanguinary bigotry which has never been effaced. The blood of the English martyrs truly proved the seed of the Church. The horrors of the papist reign did more to spread a horror of Popery through the land than could have been effected by the most zealous denunciations of a Protestant clergy. "By their fruits ye shall know them ;" and Mary's five years' persecution was a terrific appeal to the experience of the nation. No preaching, no teaching could have told like that of the unhappy victims from the midst of the flames ; the sad histories of some, the heroic death of others, could not but touch the hearts of men with pity and admiration, and all became sick of breathing an air rank with the fumes of blood.

From such a tainted atmosphere the nation was glad to escape under the auspices of Queen Elizabeth. Of the Protestantism of this illustrious princess there could be no doubt, but there were obvious motives on her part for moderation. During the last ten years, the ancient and the new competitive faith had been in alternate ascendancy ; each was represented by a numerous party of the community ; and in a sovereign ambitious to govern both in peace, it was sage policy not to evince for either a marked predilection. Consequently, at the commencement of her reign she seemed inclined to check the zeal of her own partisans, and show favour to some of the *forms* at least of their opponents. She naturally loved state and magnificence, and in her estimate the reformed worship had

been too much stripped of external ornaments. She had no objection to images in churches ; and in the matter of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament, she recommended such general terms to be adopted as might comprehend both parties. The title of "supreme head of the Church" she thought too arrogant an infringement either of the prerogative of the Roman pontiff, or of the divine founder of Christianity. Lastly, Elizabeth was no admirer of married priests, though not disposed to enjoin compulsory celibacy on the clergy.

With these modifications the queen entered heartily into the spirit of the Reformation, and soon after her accession effected a counter-revolution in the national religion. The Protestant liturgy was restored, the bench of bishops cleared of its popish occupants by tendering to them the oath of supremacy, and the Church of England entirely set up on the Cranmer foundation. Out of 10,000 ecclesiastics, only about 100 gave up their benefices, rather than conform to the new order of things ; showing either laxity of religious sentiment in the clergy, or the unimportant differences that had separated the rival worships. Energetic legislation followed for confirming the spiritual supremacy of the sovereign, and for enforcing uniformity in the prayers and services of the Church. At a later period, 1571, the articles of religion were revised, the number being reduced to thirty-nine, and subscription to them by the clergy made imperative.

Such were the chief ecclesiastical settlements, partly the results of royal, convocational, and legislative authority. By these the Protestant Reformation may be said to have been closed in this country, and the constitutional bases laid down upon which the existing Church of England is established. As usually follows great

changes, there were two classes of dissentients: first, those who thought no reformation had been needed; and secondly, those who held that the reformation had not gone far enough. Hence arose the Nonconformists and Dissenters; the former consisting either of the inconvertible adherents of the old religion, or such as could not conform to the requirements of the new; the latter of the Puritans, who aimed at what they considered a more perfect or evangelical regeneration of the doctrines and institutions of the Church. Both these descriptions of malcontents form the usual unincorporated remnants, that survive social revolutions; they are the extremes of parties, and, though from opposite motives, are usually united in a common and bitter hostility to the triumphant section that has thwarted or crushed them. Neither, however, of the discomfited divisions was wholly without plausible causes of dissatisfaction with the new settlement.

The Nonconformist might with reason ask, Why disturb the ancient worship for the modern innovation? Substantially the new is the old Church; the head has been changed, but the body is left standing; in rites, services, dogmas, and hierarchy, English Protestantism is only Romanism thinly disguised. This conclusion has been sought to be established by Delaune, in his "Plea for the Nonconformists." He shows that in the several particulars of kneeling at the sacrament, the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross, the rite of confirmation, the use of sponsors in baptism, of a liturgy or form of prayer, of altars, the observance of fasts and festivals, the ceremony of marriage, bowing at the name of Jesus and towards the east, the authority of episcopacy, and the dedication of churches to saints; in all these the Church of England symbolises not with primitive Chris-

tianity, but with the usages of Popery, originally derived from Pagan institutes, and conformable to Druidism, probably the aboriginal superstition of the ancient world.

The close resemblance between Popery and Church of Englandism ceases to surprise, if Calderwood is correct in affirming that the English service was compiled out of three Romish channels: namely, first, the Breviary, out of which the common prayers are taken; second, the Ritual, or Book of Rites, out of which the administration of the sacraments, burial, matrimony, and the visitation of the sick are taken; third, the Mass Book, out of which the consecration of the Lord's Supper, collects, epistles, and gospels are abstracted. The Rubric, or Service Book of Henry VIII.'s time, was the Romish liturgy, partly translated into English. In the next reign the whole, little altered, was rendered into the vernacular tongue. This fact was distinctly put forth in a proclamation issued by the king to the enthusiasts in the west of England, who had been incited to sedition by the malcontent priests. "As to the service in the English tongue," says Henry, "it perhaps seems to you a *new* service, yet it is indeed no other but the *old*, the self-same words in English; for nothing is altered but to speak with knowledge that which was spoken with ignorance, only a few things taken out, so *fond* that it would have been a shame to have heard them in English."* Between this period and the reign of James I. some alterations were effected, notwithstanding we find that prince thus speaking of the same service: "As for our neighbour kirk in England, their service is an evil-said mass in English: they want nothing of the mass but the *liftings*."†

* Acts and Monuments, vol. ii. p. 1189., quoted by Delaune.

† Calderwood, History of the Church of Scotland, p. 256.

Subsequently further alterations were made in the service, but of no great moment; and Charles II., in his preface to the Common Prayer, says, "The main body and essentials of it, as well in the chiefest materials as in the form and order thereof, have still continued the same unto this day, notwithstanding all vain attempts and impetuous assaults made upon it." The ordination services of both churches so closely conform, that with a few unimportant alterations they are verbatim. In minor observances there is identity between the two churches; in that of Rome the people kneel at confession or absolution, repeat after the priest the *paternoster*, stand at *gloria patri*, stand up and repeat the Apostles' Creed, kneel and repeat after the minister "*Lord have mercy upon us!*" "*Christ have mercy upon us!*" make responses at the saying of the Litany, kneel at the altar when they partake of the Eucharist, and when they ask mercy and grace after the rehearsal of the Decalogue, read the psalms alternately with the priest, sit at reading the lessons, say the psalms to the accompaniment of music; in short, to describe the Romish forms is little more than repeating the rubric of the existing Book of Common Prayer, and familiar to every hebdomadal attendant of the Church of England. Without, therefore, continuing the parallel between the old and new churches, it is obvious some scope was left for dissatisfaction with the Reformation — to the Dissenter from its imperfect approximation to the primitive Christian standard; and to the Nonconformist, who might reasonably prefer uniform adherence to the ancient faith, rather than needless transition to one which he considered not essentially different.

But the reply to both these classes of dissentients appears cogent, if not unanswerable. In the dilemma in which the great men of the Reformation were placed no

settlement, with any chance of permanency or peace, was open to them, save a compromise. They must combine the new with the old to conciliate indispensable support; and this must be the common resort in both religious and political divisions when parties are nearly balanced, or indeed if they exist in considerable disproportion. Archbishop Cranmer was just the person to accomplish the needful amalgam; for he possessed rare practical gifts — a courtier and churchman as well as comprehensive reformer. But even he and his able colleagues failed to attain all that was desirable; and the elements of religious disunion which survived their attempted fusion have continued since to operate with various degrees of intensity. Queen Elizabeth was jealous of her prerogative as head of the Church, and with her wonted energy tried coercively to repress the spiritual sedition in the newborn establishment. Penal statutes were enacted, and high commission courts, with arbitrary powers of fine, imprisonment, or exile, marshalled for its protection. So rigidly were the laws framed and executed, that it became as necessary that the people should be of one mind in religious matters, as that neither treason nor murder should be perpetrated; nor was the punishment of these offences much more severe.

The next reign was less savage in its policy. Two unfortunate Socinians were roasted, but offenders of lesser degree were more indulgently treated. It was an age of theological controversy, and most appropriate to the eccentric pedant who ruled. Stuffed with learned ignorance, restless, pragmatical, and disputative, James I. was the model of a pestilent priest or malcontent collegian. He was reputed to be the wisest man and the greatest fool in Europe. His whole time was consumed in arguing, writing, buffoonery, drinking, and hunting. Under the chairman-

ship of this accomplished droll, the famous controversy of the bishops and Puritans was maintained at Hampton Court. The first field-day held was in the privy chamber, on the 14th of January, 1604. On the one side were arrayed nearly twenty bishops and high dignitaries of the Established Church, the lords of the privy council, and sundry courtiers, all determined to applaud to the skies the royal infallibility. On the other side were four reforming preachers—Doctors Reynolds and Sparks, professors of divinity at Oxford, and Knewstubs and Chatterton, of Cambridge: the king sate high above them all “proudly preeminent” as moderator.

On the first day the learned doctors did not enter upon the real controversy, but after a day's rest they met again on the 16th, when the Puritans opened fire, by demanding, among other things, that the Book of Common Prayer should be revised; that the cup, surplice, sign of the cross in baptism, the use of the ring in marriage, the reading of the Apocrypha, the bowing at the name of Jesus, should all be set aside; that non-residence, pluralities, and commendams should not be suffered; also that the obligation of subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles should cease. Against these demands the bishops made their chief stand upon the ceremonies, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Articles: London and Winchester, assisted by some of the deans, spoke vehemently and at great length. Then, without listening to the rejoinder of the Puritans, the king took up the argument, combating for the Anglican orthodoxy in a mixed strain of solemnity, pedantry, and levity. He talked of baptism, public and private, of confirmation, marriage, excommunication, and absolution, which last he declared to be apostolical and an excellent ordinance. But it would be endless to report the royal expatiations; speak-

ing was the king's delight, and he commanded and enjoyed a most discursive volubility. At the height of his argument he treated St. Jerome very disrespectfully for saying that bishops were not of divine ordination, closing with his favourite aphorism, "No bishop, no king." When he was tired and out of breath, Dr. Reynolds was allowed to explain. The doctor objected to the Apocrypha, particularly to the book of Ecclesiasticus. James called for a Bible, expounded a chapter of Ecclesiasticus in his own way, then turning to his applauding lords, said, "What trow ye make these men so angry with Ecclesiasticus? By my soul I think Ecclesiasticus was a bishop, or they would never use him so." The bishops smiled decorously, the courtiers less demurely. In answer to a question started by the abashed Puritans—How far an ordinance of the Church could bind without impeaching Christian liberty?—James said he would not argue that point, but answer them as kings are wont to answer in parliament—*le roy s'avisera*; adding withal that the query smelt very rankly of Anabaptism. Next he told a story of a Mr. John Black, a Scottish preacher, who had impudently told him that matters of ceremony in the Church ought to be left in Christian liberty to every man. "But," added the king, "I will none of that; I will have one doctrine, one discipline, and one religion in substance and ceremony. If you aim at a Scottish presbytery, it agreeth with monarchy as God with the devil. Then Jack and Tom, and Will and Dick, shall meet and censure me and my council and all our proceedings." Next turning to the dissenter Reynolds, said, "Well, doctor, have you anything more to offer?" The humbled divine, who had been constantly interrupted and insulted, replied, "No, please your majesty."

So virtually ended the Hampton Court conference. On the morrow the king rested from his labours. On the 18th the dissenting divines were not admitted till a late hour, and then not to renew the disputation, but only to implore that conformity should not be enforced till after a certain interval. James granted their request, and, with much self-gratulation at his theological victory, dismissed them. His flatterers had not waited for the close to shower down their plaudits. Bancroft, bishop of London, who had before been on his knees "to beseech his majesty to stop the mouth of a schismatic," repeated his genuflexions; "thanking God for his singular mercy in giving them such a king, as since Christ's time the like had not been." Whitgift, the primate, without falling upon his knees, exclaimed that undoubtedly "his majesty spake by the special assistance of God's Spirit." The laity, not to be outdone by the spirituals, joined in the chorus of adulation to the British Solomon. Lord Chancellor Ellesmere affirmed that "king and priest had never been so wonderfully united in the same person;" and the temporal lords generally applauded his majesty's speeches, as proceeding from a "holy spirit and an understanding heart." All this is rich; but no one thought so highly of King James as James himself. "I peppered them soundly," said he; "they fled me from argument to argument like schoolboys."

The dissenters attempted to rally, and a fresh disputation waited upon the king, but they were again routed by the royal logician. James was a very difficult opponent to encounter, and not scrupulous in his weapons, being a bold liar and not inapt dissembler. Calvinism was the doctrinal faith of all—Presbyterians, Puritans, and Episcoplians. With the metaphysical subtleties of the Geneva school the king was thoroughly conversant, but he

disliked their secular applications. Cherishing lofty notions of kingly prerogatives, he abhorred them for their democratic tendency; neither did he affect the strictness of their moral conclusions. In 1599 he wrote and published, for the instruction of his son, Prince Henry, his *Basilicon Doron*, a masterpiece of pedantry, a model of clerical abuse against the Puritans and the whole Church of Scotland. Nothing, he said, could be more monstrous than equality in the Church—nothing more derogatory to the royal dignity than the independence of preachers. Therefore he advises his son to take heed of such Puritans, as “pests in the Church and commonwealth, whom no deserts can oblige; suffer not the principal of them to brook your land, if ye list to sit at rest; except ye would keep them for trying your patience as Socrates did his wife.” He afterwards declared to the English bishops—“I will tell you: I have lived among this sort of men (Puritans and Presbyterians) ever since I was ten years old; but I may say of myself, as *Christ said of himself*, though I lived among them, yet, since I had ability to judge, I was never of them.”

“The Protestant Pope,” the title with which Jamie delighted to be honoured, had other diversions than theology and listening to the fulsome incense of servile priests and courtiers. He loved hunting as much as he loved polemics, and he issued a proclamation that none of his lieges should trouble him with their religious scruples on hunting days, which days of sport occupied one half the year. Meanwhile the laws against nonconformity were strictly enforced at the instance of Bancroft, who had succeeded Whitgift in the primacy. Many clergymen were driven from their benefices,—some to wander in foreign countries, some to suffer, with their wives and children, absolute want at home. Spies, such as had been trained to

the work in ferreting out papists and private masses, found their way to prayer-meetings and secret conventicles, and the gaols of the kingdom began rapidly to be crowded with unlicensed preachers. The Puritans soon added to a contempt of the king's person a thorough hatred of his whole scheme of government. Still they made no advances towards any sound principle—to any sentiment of general toleration ; and when James proceeded to a more rigid persecution of the Catholics, they only complained that he was not sharp enough. Smarting themselves under the inflictions of a despotic Church, they did not conceal that, if they could get the rod in their own hands, they would lay it on with an increased severity upon all who did not conform to their peculiar doctrines.

At this point it may be useful to pause. Having reached the first crisis in the history of the Anglican Church, it will not be wasted time briefly to glance at the light thrown by the preceding retrospection on existing ecclesiastical perplexities.

The first conclusion that strikes us is the parallelism between the religious dissensions of King James's reign and those of Queen Victoria. The identity is not flattering to the march of intellect, but the resemblance is too close to be overlooked. The points mooted at the Hampton Court conference, between the Anglican prelates and the reforming divines, were almost precisely those now in issue between the Tractarians and their opponents. They do not turn upon the essentials of Christianity—upon those primitive points of the Christian mission that refer to the moral and social interests of men, but to forms and ceremonies—to the use of the cup and surplice, sign of the cross, genuflexions eastward or at the name of Jesus, floral emblems, and subscription

to the Articles. Is it fit that the age should so recede?—that at one step it should recoil two centuries and a half in its onward career?—that under the intemperate or mistaken zeal of a fresh generation of Oxford divines, it should be carried back from the substantial utilities that occupy it—its temperate philosophy—generous toleration—cheerful and diversified literature—and noble sympathies with human suffering—to be plunged in the gloom, asceticism, and theological trifling of a semi-barbarous period? That the age was rude is notorious; one of royal favouritism and courtly licentiousness—of hypocrisy, treachery, and espionage; of secret poisonings, bloody executions, and savage murders. It was an age of one book, a very good one undoubtedly, but hardly commensurate to the diversified exigencies of existing society. The manual of life, all that men reasoned, argued, and quarrelled concerning, was the Bible and its conflicting interpretations; it formed the sole cyclopædia of science, ethics, natural philosophy, ecclesiastical and political government. It was from this armoury that all weapons of controversy were derived; all authorities deduced; all perplexing and mystifying texts quoted. In such a limited field, with such stinted intellectual resources, it was impossible men could advance in secular knowledge, unanimity, or toleration. They were a prey to the conceits, fancies, and fluctuating impulses of narrow and half-literate guides, and the questions which occupied them were seldom more important or cogently supported than those of the Muscovite doctors. In a controversy of these northern sages, when the question was—“Whether the practice of smoking tobacco was a sin?” the respondent maintained that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke; because the Holy Scripture saith, “that which proceedeth out of the

mouth defileth a man, while that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

King James was the oracle — the type of his time — its pedantry, ignorance, and superstition. The "wise fool," as Sully termed him, dedicated one of his literary performances to Jesus Christ; in another erudite work on Demonology, he had the good fortune to discover "why the devil did worke more with auncient women than with others." His belief in evil spirits, however, is no great disparagement to his understanding. It was the common faith of the period. The 72nd of the English canons requires a bishop's "license to the clergy for the *casting out of devils*." In a sermon preached before Queen Elizabeth by Bishop Jewel, is the following illustrative rarity: — "It may please your grace to understand that this kind of people, I mean *witches and sorcerers*, within these few years are marvellously increased within your grace's realm. These eyes have seen most evident and manifest marks of their wickedness. Your grace's subjects pine away even unto death; their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth; their speech is benumbed, their senses bereft. Wherefore your poor subjects' humble petition to your highness is, that the laws touching such malefactors may be put in due execution. For the shoal of them is great, their doings horrible, their malice intolerable, their example most miserable; and I pray God they may never practise further than upon the subject." *

An age ought not to be judged by selected specimens, but by its average characteristics. If exceptional examples were allowed, what would be the future estimate of our own time? At no former period were the laws

* Middleton's Works, vol. i. p. 355.

of nature better or more generally understood ; yet there are believers in mesmerism, in supernatural agencies, and in effects without causes. Faith in astrology and sorcery were, however, the reverse of exceptional under Elizabeth and her Stuart successors.

A dread of witches long continued a disturbing apprehension of the nation. Two centuries later, individuals, reputed learned and enlightened, were not exempt from the delusion. No less a personage than Mr. Justice Blackstone, in the presence of the reverend and orthodox body by whom he was appointed to teach, solemnly affirmed, that "to deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament."* It is needless to revert to the sentiments of Dr. Johnson or Addison ; the first a wilful superstitionist, the other an admirable essayist on common things, but trite and timid in the logical search of important truths.

* *Commentaries* (originally *Lectures at Oxford*), book iv. chap. 4.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACCESSION OF THE STUARTS.

Advantages from the New Dynasty. — Character of King James. — Policy of his Reign. — Progress of the Country. — New and useful Laws. — London, its Riches and Buildings. — First Application of Steam. — Lord Bacon; his Writings. — Men of Letters and Literature. — Theological Controversies. — New Translation of the Bible. — Commencement of Political Disagreements with the Commons. — Death of James I. — Results of his peaceful Reign in improving the Condition of the People.

THE Tudor and Stuart eras differ in name, and mostly form marked subdivisions in historical narration, but they had the characteristic in common of being eminently tranquil. No great external war intervened under either dynasty seriously to interrupt national progress. During the long term of nearly two centuries that elapsed from the accession of the first Tudor to the expulsion of the last Stuart, the kingdom may be said to have been left free to the self-development of its own vitalities in every direction, according to the predominant impulse, in government, religion, laws, and industrial avocations. The absence of any great foreign distraction left full scope for the agitation of the momentous domestic questions pertaining to political and ecclesiastical affairs, which, by their engrossing interests, render the two periods the most instructive in the history of England.

Abiding fruits to the common weal, though differing in origin and kind, were reaped under both the Tudors and Stuarts: under the former the crown acquired a

seasonable enlargement of powers, by which it effected salutary reforms ; and the civil conflicts under the Stuarts finally issued in vesting in the people that constitutional control which a more elevated social status had made them competent to exercise. The prudent policy of Henry VII. was sedulously directed to the compression of the unruly sway of a turbulent nobility, and to the augmenting the influence of the more peaceful and productive classes of the community. Under his successor, the enormous abuses of the Church were vigorously grappled with, not only by the purification of the ecclesiastical establishment at home, but by the emancipation of the kingdom from the odious and exacting dominion of the see of Rome.

These were great and beneficial national advances, and which it was impossible so promptly and efficiently to consummate unaided by a temporary increase of the executive authority of the sovereign. But this accompanying drawback was in its turn abated, and that principally by the new agency it had contributed to call into active existence. The triumphs of the crown consisted in the humiliation of the aristocracy and the Church ; those of the Commons in reducing within more responsible limits the claims of royal prerogative. By both movements—and this is the important general conclusion to bear in mind—the solid interests and welfare of the community were more firmly secured, and the foundation laid for ulterior advances.

Neither the first Stuart, however, nor the succeeding princes of that family, can be considered to have had a direct share in the progress of the country. But the accession of James I. had incidental advantages. First, it settled the right of succession, and quieted all rival claims to the throne, amounting to fourteen, on the death of Elizabeth. It had the second important benefit of uniting the crowns of England and Scotland under one

head, by which frequent international disputes were averted, and the tranquillity of the northern counties assured. Prior to the union, England had never enjoyed the advantages of her insular position. The barbarous tenants of the borders had constantly, since the departure of the Romans, kept that part of the island in a state of civil war, and had produced a race of savage marauders. The Maxwells and Johnstones were notorious in these border feuds, and the peaceable inhabitants were often the victims of their roving bands. Writers who indulge in mediæval eccentricities have been found perverted enough in taste to seek to embellish, with the aid of romance, this disgusting period of history.

King James was favourably received on his arrival in England, and to which the pitiless execution of his unfortunate mother may have contributed. Further, he bore the reputation of moderation and justice, and was especially renowned for wisdom. Unfortunately, his wisdom was of a kind not likely to confer great practical benefits on his new subjects; he shone, as elucidated in the previous chapter, darkly luminous in polemics, a branch of knowledge that from its nature precluded progress and invention. In this line his attainments only made an addition to the elements of confusion with which the nation had begun to be distracted. Besides theology, the new sovereign was deep in the mysteries of witchcraft, and was himself the author of some books on the occult sciences, which were then fashionable studies, and the popular faith in which, even to the present day, is not wholly obliterated.

The king had been unfortunate in early associations, in the barbarous or unimproving examples around him. From his preceptor, the classical Buchanan, he imbibed the notion, that a sovereign ought to be the most learned clerk in his dominions. Hence, the learned lumber he

had accumulated, and the pedantic attainments which earned for him the disparaging appreciation, already quoted, of the French minister of Henry IV. No man abounded more in maxims of wisdom ; but their application was spoiled by timidity, fickleness, credulity, and the childish preferences of individuals for merely personal accomplishments. James was passionately fond of field sports ; a free liver, even to intemperance ; and delighted in table wit, its jollities and buffoonery.

Upon the whole, however deficient or mistaken the king may have been, he seems to have been quite right in his own choice of life. “ *Were I not a king,*” said he, on visiting the Bodleian Library, “ *I would wish to be an university man.*” His love of literature was sincere, and as a college tutor he might have passed through life agreeably both to himself and others ; but for the regal office he failed in the requisite abilities and ambition. He had one exemplary merit, unhappily too rare in princes not to be fully debited to him ; he was a lover of peace, and abstained from squandering national wealth in profitless wars.

An incident that occurred on the king’s journey from Edinburgh exhibits an irregular exercise of criminal justice, probably not very startling at the period. When James was at Newark he ordered a pickpocket who had been detected, to be hung, without trial, by his sole warrant. Upon another occasion, in London, he commanded one of the mob, which had insulted Gondemar the Spanish ambassador, to be publicly whipped by the common hangman. These summary adjudications would doubtless appear trivial to the Scottish monarch, who from childhood had been familiarised with the ruthless contemporary history of Scotland, presenting only a record of treachery, murder, and fanaticism.

Happily, the more improved inheritance to which James acceded helped to neutralise some of the defects of his education, character, and experience. Under the auspices of his immediate predecessor England had attained European fame, was renowned abroad, and had long been flourishing at home. But internal prosperity had commenced almost a century earlier. Before the beginning of Elizabeth's reign agriculture, commerce, manufactures, fisheries, distant voyages had been in successful progress. The policy of the new government did not impede these advances, but by twenty-two years of peace cultivated and accelerated them.

A great obstruction to commerce had been the limiting its exercise to privileged companies, cities, or towns. This restraint extended both to the home and foreign trade. These monopolies were checked, especially that giving exclusive rights of trading to continental states, and by a law under James all persons were permitted to trade with France, Spain, and Portugal. Among subordinate enactments favourable to industry may be reckoned the encouragement given to useful discoveries by vesting, for fourteen years, the exclusive profit of a new contrivance in the inventor. Agricultural interests were promoted by acts confirming the possessions of copyholders, for quieting dormant claims on lands descended from remote ancestors, and for restricting the rights of sporting. The recovery of debts was facilitated by the abolition of sanctuaries and the establishment of courts of conscience, and a fertile source of vexatious litigation curtailed by enacting that no book-entry should be evidence of goods delivered longer than a year. Other statutes were of a moral as well as industrial tendency; as those against tippling in public-houses; and the important one, which makes it felony either in man or woman to be guilty of bigamy.

A salutary restraint of law-suits was the 21 James, cap. 12., which limits the period within which actions at law may be instituted. According to this statute actions for scandal must be brought within two years; actions of trespass, battery, wounding, or imprisonment within four years; and actions on the case, on account of debt, detinue, or replevin, within six years. All this legislation evidences the practical spirit of the age, and the new social interests that had risen into consideration devoted to industry, order, and general usefulness.

An increase of trade and industry was productive of its natural issue in the increase of riches. The growing opulence of the community is attested by successive reductions in the interest of money. In 1545 the rate had been limited to 10 per cent. per annum; in 1624 the rate was lowered to 8 per cent., in 1660 to 6 per cent., and under Anne to 5 per cent. At this limit it legally continued up to 1854, when all laws pertaining to the subject, or to usury, were abolished. Stow, the chronicler, testifies to the thriving state of the kingdom. He says, as Camden had said before him, that it would "in time be incredible, were not due mention made of it, what increase there is, within these few years, of commerce and wealth throughout the nation; of the great building of royal and mercantile ships; of the repeopling of cities, towns, and villages; beside the sudden augmentation of fair and costly buildings."

The progress of the metropolis is evidence of the general advancement of the country. Under Henry II. Fitzstephen reckons the population of London to amount to only 40,000, with, however, 126 churches, besides conventional ones. The limited space within the walls of the City was not wholly built upon; part being occupied by gardens and open spaces. Houses in the twelfth, and

some centuries after, were never more than a story above ground ; the ground-floor was called the cellar, the upper floor a solor.* They were built almost entirely of wood, the Earl of Arundel being the first to introduce the general practice of brick buildings. The size of the capital rapidly increased in the seventeenth century, doubling its population every forty years ; consequently it contained fourfold the number of inhabitants in 1680 than it contained in 1600. Its increase in riches in this and the next reign kept pace. Anderson, in his "History of Commerce," mentions, that all the shops in Cheapside, from Bucklersbury to Old Change, were occupied by goldsmiths.

An application of science in this period deserves commemoration, from the extraordinary revolution it has consummated by successive improvements up to the present time in mechanical power. In 1618 a patent was granted for a steam-engine, or, as it was then called, a "fire-engine," for taking ballast out of rivers, and for raising quantities of water. It appears to have been the earliest attempt in the application of steam in England ; and as it occurred forty-five years before the Marquis of Worcester published a description of his steam-engine, probably the invention had been brought from Italy, where it had been antecedently used. A few years later, in 1629, Brancas, an Italian philosopher, published at Rome a book on the steam-engine. Italy had been the great pioneer in European discoveries in arts, literature, and science, from the mediæval period.

But England had now begun to shine with original lustre, and had become bright, fertile, and leading in intellectual manifestations. The productions of Shak-

* Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 400.

speare and Francis Bacon alone, leaving out of view secondary names, were abundantly sufficient to establish the reputation of the country for originality of intellect, if not for artistical felicities. Of the genius of the great dramatist there is no dispute, any more than on that of Homer; but Lord Bacon appears in a more questionable shape, and the order of worthies to which he belongs has not been so concurrently settled. The colossal grasp of his intellect no one doubts, nor its extraordinary activity, variety, and productiveness; but the universality of his genius has been demurred to, its searching depths, originality, and comprehensiveness. Lord Bacon possessed many qualities in common with his contemporaries, and many others that raised him preeminently above them. He was an ambitious man of the world, early introduced into it; a successful courtier, ready and astute lawyer, and probably in an equal degree a philosopher, either by his devotion to truth or the attainment of it. But it may be surmised that he was more replete with the gifts which usually distinguish his caste and profession, than those of learning only. Resplendent in eloquence, exuberant in wit, rich and glowing in imagination, with a close observance of the human mind and conduct, he possessed in profusion the attributes and graces that make the accomplished orator or the fine and ingenious writer; but failed in strength or independence of thought successfully to cultivate the loftier walks of science, and left the world as dark as he found it, in the inheritance of its traditional fables and conventionalisms, without a glimpse of that flood of light since shed over its moral, historical, and physical developments.

Great distinction as a natural philosopher has almost ceased to be claimed for Bacon. It was incompatible with his acquirements and pursuits as well as character

and mental constitution. This is Mr. Hallam's conclusion:—“He was more eminently the philosopher of human than of general nature. Hence he is exact as well as profound in all his reflections on civil life and mankind; while his conjectures in natural philosophy, though often very acute, are apt to wander far from the truth in consequence of his defective acquaintance with the phenomena of nature.”*

But if not happy in his own physical researches, the rare merit of directing others in their culture has been very generally conceded to Bacon. It was certainly a great favour to mankind to fix their attention on positive realities in place of mere speculative futilities, and that at a time when a belief in witchcraft and spectral appearances was the all but universal faith. It is true, however, that both the absolute originality of the Inductive Method and its practical benefits have been contested. There can be no doubt that all mankind are experimenters; it is the main source of knowledge, from infancy to the end of life, and the beginning of experience is coeval with the beginning of the human race. But the value of a truth is often less that it is new or true than that it has, by some efficient or seasonable impression, been successfully fixed on general attention and practice. Even if the practice had antecedently prevailed, the judgment and verdict of mankind had not before been openly pronounced on the difference between the abstract and real in the pursuit of knowledge; and this service Bacon undeniably rendered, by bringing truth-seekers from the bewilderment of dreams to look at the substance of creation. He set them on the right track with their eyes open, even though it be correct that no

* History of the Literature of Europe, vol. iii. p. 218.

great discovery can be identified or traced in origin to the publication of the "Novum Organum." It certainly, for a long period, bore no fruit in England, for no signal discoveries in physical science were made till the time of Sir Isaac Newton; and though the great ones of Newton, in astronomy and optics, resulted from a beautiful sequence of induction and experiment, it is possible, and not unlikely, they may have been all made without the new instrument of Bacon. Abroad, the foundation of modern natural philosophy had been laid before, or contemporary with Bacon, by the great discoveries of Galileo, Kepler, and Torricelli.

But why omit from the list the great Roger Bacon, who lived two centuries earlier, and who was as strenuous as Lord Bacon himself in recommending mankind to grasp the substance in lieu of the shadows of things, and who, by his own piercing insight into some of the mysteries of nature, became an object of jealousy and persecution by his contemporaries?*

The natural science of Lord Bacon has been superseded by later advances; and of his writings on other topics, his Essays on Ethics and Conduct are the chief which retain a place in the national mind. On morals, life, and politics he is the standard oracle of wisdom; and no author, save Shakspeare, is in more constant use and quotation. His pregnant aphorisms, often as striking from beauty of expression and illustration as solid truth, circulate like the sterling coin of the realm. Thus, after all deductions have been made, Bacon stands supreme in the most important domains of knowledge—those pertaining to men's business and bosoms. In these he certainly lived before his time, and anticipated the most valuable discoveries,

* See the brief notice of this great luminary of the thirteenth century, *antè*, p. 53.

—having for their end and aim, as one of his luminous delineators has shown, the great practical purpose of all inquiries, Utility and Progress.*

It heightens the impression of Bacon's ethical ascendancy, that he retains undiminished authority, defiant of his own detestable history. But the miracle of this will probably appear less if we consider, as certainly the world has begun to do, the little connection there often is between intellect and social or individual beneficence. All the natural science and all the moral science ever reached or promulgated will fail to make a good man, without the conducive affection, without the heartfelt disposition to be just and humane. Bacon had a vast intellect, but he had also, as Mr. Macaulay has said, “hardness of heart and meanness of spirit.” What he failed in to make his deeds worthy of his immortal words was a noble and sympathising soul; and this solves the contradictions in the career of the “greatest and meanest of mankind.”

Something, perhaps, may be pleaded in extenuation. Bribes were hardly held to be corrupt offerings in Bacon's days; they were rather considered fees, given and received as they still are generally in Russia and the East, to supply the deficiency in official salaries. King James only paid a secretary of state 200*l.* per annum,—the same sum he paid to his master of the fighting-cocks. Of course, the disparity in remuneration was understood to be made up from other sources. Lord Bacon's ignominious conviction did not stand alone; it had been preceded by that of the Lord-Treasurer Suffolk, and a little after by that of the judges in the ecclesiastical courts. But the lord chancellor seems to have been the most glaring delinquent; he held the highest seat of justice, and received bribes with both hands—from plaintiff and defendant.

* Art. BACON, by Mr. Macaulay, Edinburgh Review, July, 1837.

Some of the minor luminaries that set about the time of Bacon are not unworthy of mention. There was the unfortunate but all-accomplished Sir Walter Raleigh,—statesman, historian, poet, and cavalier. Besides were Burton, author of the “Anatomy of Melancholy;” Jeremy Taylor, the Spenser of prose-writers, and the author of the “Golden Grove” and “Holy Living and Dying;” Harrington, who taught, in his “Oceana,” that the natural element of power in states is property, became eminent a little later; as did also Hobbes, the Malmesbury philosopher, and Sir Thomas Browne, who wrote on “Urn-Burial” and “Vulgar Errors.” But the age was most prolific in theological literature, consisting of a boundless effusion of sermons and controversial tracts, all of which have passed into oblivion. The new or rather amended translation of the Bible has had a different fate. It was made at the instance of King James, and still continues the authorised version of the Holy Scriptures. The new rendering was based on Parker’s, or the Bishop’s Bible, which had been published nearly forty years before, and which had itself been founded on that of Cranmer, made under Henry VIII. Consequently the language of King James’s Bible is not wholly that of Raleigh or Bacon, though partly modernised to that standard; but in the main belongs to an earlier period. However, the translation has been highly successful and satisfactory, probably from the general picturesque and antique beauty of the current version being most in keeping with the subject and the remote era and locality of the original writings.

Little further remains to conclude the reign of King James. It is the misfortune of princes frequently to outlive the favourable impression with which they began to govern. To this fatality the king did not form an exception, though the term of his rule barely equalled one half

that of Queen Elizabeth. Towards the close of his reign his unpopularity increased, partly from the wild and resultless Spanish adventures of Prince Charles, and, more seriously, from disagreements with the House of Commons. Early in 1622 parliament was abruptly dissolved, and its more popular leaders imprisoned. The House of Lords, too, had become refractory ; two of its members, Oxford and Southampton, were imprisoned ; and from this time the upper assembly began to assume the aspect of a regular opposition to the court. For two years after, no parliament was summoned ; but on again meeting, the king's urgencies appear to have induced a more humble tone. No proclamation was issued against the people meddling with "state mysteries," and the Commons were invited to advise with the king on public affairs, especially the marriage of his son. On the vital question of supplies the Commons continued stringent, as before, and conceded only half the king's demands ; and over these they resorted to the unusual expedient of appointing managers to receive them and direct their appropriation.

The king did not long survive these annoyances. He died in March 1625 in his 59th year, his death probably hastened by vexation, gout, and dietary indulgences. It closed a reign of rather ignoble features, without grandeur or magnanimity, degraded, in its leading public character, by mendacity, insincerity, and corruption ; and with little higher to animate general society than theological wrangling and sectarian bitterness. It had one compensating advantage in its peaceful tenor, tending to augment the productive capital of the country, and thereby the growing importance of the middle orders. The general improvement had extended to the labouring classes, who, from the ample measure of comfort and in-

dependence that they enjoyed beyond that of any former period, had come to be an object of political consideration. The awakening powers of the Reformation, and the energies of action and enterprise fostered under the vigorous sway of Elizabeth, had diffused a new spirit of life through all grades of the community but to the highest, which had declined. “The force by which our kings in former times were troubled, is,” says the talented Raleigh, “vanished away. But the necessities remain ; the people therefore, in these latter ages, are no less to be pleased than the peers before.”

CHAPTER IX.

CHARLES I. AND THE CIVIL WAR.

Defects of Charles's Character.—Leading Events of his Reign.—Merits of the Question between the King and Parliament.—Battle of Edgehill; Military Spirit evinced on both Sides, despite of a long Peace.—Character of the War; did not materially interrupt Social Progress.—Triumph of the Independents and Republicans.—King's Errors.—Relative Character of Political Claims under the Stuarts and at Present.—Increase of Riches among the Lords and Commons.

CHARLES, the son and successor of James, was more gentlemanly in his tastes and accomplishments than his erratic predecessor. He was fond of the fine arts, made no pretension to the pedantic learning, and was exempt from the pusillanimous spirit, of the late king. In other respects, neither in character nor principles, he did not evince any superiorities. He cherished the like disastrous notion of the illimitable prerogatives of the kingly office. He was wilful, passionate, and infirm in judgment. In

choice of time, place, and person, he was mostly wrong. His ministers were chosen not for their fitness, but for their subserviency to his humours and arbitrary maxims of government. Buckingham was a reckless profligate ; Laud a bigoted high churchman ; Strafford a libertine and hireling of the court,—a man of ability, but ambitious and void of principle, the iron man, in short, who “ despised danger and laughed at labour.”

The king was ruined by his friends. But if this was weakness in him, he had other traits of character that demand harsher appellations. Writers agree that he was a dissembler, void of truth and sincerity. These odious traits are evinced by his equivocal acceptance of the Petition of Rights ; by the favour he showed the papists after a solemn engagement to enforce the penal laws against them ; his faithless negotiation at the close of the civil war with the Scots, the Presbyterians, and Independents ; and his shuffling abandonment of his purchased instrument, Strafford.

The great events of the reign of Charles may be thus classed. 1. The war with Spain, with which the king was embroiled on his accession ; and the war with France, into which he entered to gratify the private spite of Buckingham, and in both of which he reaped only disgrace and disappointment. 2. His disputes with parliament, also in part inherited from his predecessor, but aggravated by the pecuniary difficulties arising out of the wars ; and when the House of Commons felt more disposed to impose checks on misrule, than grant supplies for its wasteful support. 3. His long effort to govern like an absolute monarch, without parliamentary control ; this he did for eleven years, levying taxes, and even imposing new ones by royal mandate only. Such stretch of prerogative was unquestionably as great a departure from

constitutional forms, as the deviation of the Commons to the other extreme in their attempt to govern without a king. 4. His bigoted and impolitic efforts to impose on Scotland, contrary to the national faith, the English liturgy and episcopal government. Lastly, the great Civil War, which originated in the conflicting claims of the crown and the liberties of the people, and which terminated in the discomfiture of the king and his public execution.

The merits of this memorable civil conflict have been the frequent topic of controversy, and upon which men must continue divided so long as they differ on the derivation and chief end of governments. Charles Stuart considered the prerogatives of the crown not as a trust for public benefit, but as an inheritance for his individual indulgence. Hence in his struggles with parliament, he looked upon them as little better than audacious brigands, who sought to rob him of the patrimony inherited from his ancestors, and which he ought to transmit unimpaired to his posterity.

On both sides there was probably a semblance of legal justice. In favour of the king were the practices of the Tudors, not uniformly exercised, or without question acquiesced in. In favour of parliament were the written principles of the government, as set forth in Magna Charta and other statutes. In addition to these great authorities were many subordinate guarantees of freedom. 1. In actual precedents or examples of liberty, often, it is true, mixed up with contrary precedents and examples, but sufficient to legitimise and support parliamentary claims. 2. In institutions and customs, as the jury trial, the right of assembling in public, of being armed, and in the independence of magistrates and municipal bodies. Lastly, the peculiarity of the times required a stand to be made

for the authority of the Commons, in order to check inordinate levies of taxes to supply the waste of the hereditary revenues of the crown. Had parliament acquiesced in the pretensions of the king, it must have continued the mockery of representation it had been,—a council only for the assessments of imposts on its constituents, that could not otherwise be raised. It demurred, and achieved for itself a higher grade in the constitution.

Upon the issues thus set forth the sword was drawn. The king left Whitehall in the spring of 1642, and on August 22nd set up the royal standard at Nottingham. Upon his banner was inscribed—*Give Cæsar his due.* It was a summary of his case in fact and principle. Dues were really the cause of the last appeal on both sides; dues by right of prerogative, and withheld on constitutional grounds. More general questions were doubtless involved, but the proximate cause of the civil war was one of pecuniary dispute and embarrassment. The straits of the king, like those which not uncommonly visit private persons, were the disproportion between his means and his wants. Charles had tried all irregular modes of raising supplies in the levy by order in council of tonnage and poundage, by the sale of crown lands, by ship writs, and by forced loans from individuals. Upon one occasion, no supplies having been voted for the civil list, the king's necessities became so urgent that to buy provisions for his own table he borrowed 3000*l.* of the corporations of Salisbury and Southampton. Consequently the war, in its ultimate phase, became a money question, as is not unusually the practical form in revolutionary convulsions to which controversies on public grievances are reduced prior to an outbreak of greater violence.

Actual hostilities between the king and parliament lasted nearly four years. The combatants first measured

swords in open field on a Sunday, about noon, at Edgehill. During four hours the arrayed armies, Englishmen against Englishmen, confronted, each hesitating to strike the first blow. At length Essex, with pike in hand, gave the word, and the parliamentarians began with a thundering discharge of artillery. The conflict was ardent but confused, and ended in a drawn battle, in which the slaughter was considerable on both sides, and on both worthies of high repute bit the dust. Like the first encounter, the war throughout was carried on in a gallant spirit. There had been no great war from the accession of the Tudors, and yet during that long term of a century and a half the national energies had continued unabated. Peace had induced none of that enervation which is sometimes ascribed to it, and the chivalrous spirit glowed as brightly, and more so, with less admixture of savagery, than it had done in the days of the Plantagenets. With rare exceptions needless or vengeful outrages were abstained from ; the combatants, like honourable men, were sensible that they had been friends, and might be so again. Those in arms and resisting were alone held liable to the penalties of war, and that on meet occasions. There were no secret murders or marauding ; no bands of freebooters assembling for spoil between the quarters of the armies or among the villages deprived of their fighting men ; no violent outbreak or massacre of a licentious rabble disfigured the "grave severity of this mighty conflict." In almost every township recruiting was going on, and persons raising men at the same time for king and parliament. In the south the latter prevailed, the king's strength lying principally in the midland and northern counties.

The generous spirit in which the war was carried on made its evils and civil disturbance less than might

have been imagined. A siege or field fight, no doubt, was a severe calamity in the town or district where it happened; and, before a final settlement, this scourge was sharply felt in England, Scotland, and Ireland. But, apart from the scene of warfare, the general occupations of industry were not interrupted. The land was tilled; manufacturers and handicraftsmen plied their vocation; justice was administered by the magistrates; and the judges went their circuits, passing through the opposite armies protected by flags of truce; marriages and funerals were solemnised by the clergy; all, in short, that constituted the order and economy of society pursued the wonted routine. The strife was too limited in time, the proportion of the population engaged in warfare too small, and the sense of justice and humanity, growing out of a considerably advanced civilisation, too general for lasting or irreparable damage to be perpetrated.

Alarmed by the troubled aspect of the times, timid people buried their money in the earth or other hiding-places, or deposited it with the goldsmiths, who then exercised the function of bankers, and had begun to pay interest on deposits. It is likely, however, that the general circulation was increased by the war, and an impulse given to production by increased consumption. The rents of land were increased, and large tracts brought into cultivation. The provincial towns became more populous and flourishing. London increased in size in spite of discouraging proclamations. The country houses of the gentry became more elegant and commodious. One decisive evidence of progression is the large fund contributed to defray expenses. Voluntary subscriptions were raised to a great amount for both king and parliament. The nobility subscribed liberally; the Earl of Newcastle, for example, 10,000*l.* The counties raised

subscriptions ; that of Buckingham, Hampden's county, 6000*l.* The House of Commons freely gave their money, as well as their speeches, and some of them their swords, to the cause. Foremost in the list of the contributing members is Sir Henry Martin 1200*l.*, followed by Walter Long, Sir John Haslerig, and Sir John Harrison, each an equal sum, Hampden 1000*l.*, Oliver Cromwell 500*l.*, Pym and Whitelock 600*l.* each. In addition, the people were tried by a double taxation, one for each party ; and that they were able to bear both to the unprecedented extent they are known to have done affords undoubted proof not only of the general zeal awakened, but of the great increase in national riches to support it.

Three-fourths of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom, with their tenantry, were arrayed on the side of Charles ; on the counterpart were the squires, yeomanry, merchants, tradespeople, and commonalty of the cities and towns. Both universities took the royal side, and made the king a present of their plate, but the Cambridge plate was intercepted *in transitu* by Cromwell. The stronghold of parliament was the metropolis, being the chief source of supplies in men and money. The two train bands, with auxiliary regiments of London apprentices, artisans, and shopkeepers, proved an unconquerable force. The cavaliers often tested the bravery of the former—the “pen and bodkin men” as they termed them—with charges of horse and foot, but May says they stood both with dauntless resolution. For their behaviour at Newbury, Clarendon, the royalist historian, compliments their valour ; admits that they stood as a “bulwark and rampire” to defend the rest ; and though Prince Rupert himself led up the choice horse to charge them, he could make no impression on their “stand of pikes.”

With few exceptions the feelings of all classes were enlisted on one side or the other in this famous civil broil. The storm, however, though sparsely fierce and perturbing, did not sweep the entire surface, or reach all the depths of society. It partook of the nature of a duel on a grand scale, or knightly tournament, to which the clashing political and religious sections contributed their contingent of heroes. There are instances even of individuals of some position in society who lived quietly in their mansions through the war in full possession of their accustomed enjoyments, and apparently unconscious of the storm which raged outside. It has been related of a Yorkshire gentleman who kept a diary of all occurrences that he considered of interest, that he never once alludes to the quarrel between the Roundheads and Royalists.* His passion was for shooting and fox-hunting adventures, which he carefully chronicles in his Journal, but passes unnoticed the bloody conflicts in his own immediate neighbourhood.†

The disastrous fields of Naseby and Marston Moor concluded the fortunes of Charles Stuart. He became a fugitive among the Scots, who surrendered him to the victorious parliamentarians for a bribe of 200,000*l.* Up

* *Anecdotes and Traditions of Early English History.* By the Camden Society.

† A parallel to this anecdote may be instanced in the *Memoirs* of the late Charles Mathews. The busy portion of the life of this eminent comedian was contemporary with the extraordinary scenes of the French revolution; yet he never refers to the Reign of Terror, Danton, Marat, or Robespierre, nor even to the victorious career of Napoleon Bonaparte. His world of existence was theatrical, and he lived unconscious of any other. It is, in truth, the general character of society; each coterie, profession, party, or sect, has its own exclusive circle of life, regardless of the rest.

to this transaction the Presbyterians had been the triumphant party, but by a rapid series of events they lost their ascendancy. They had no wish for extreme measures, and were favourable to the maintenance of the kingly office. Monarchy in the state and democracy in the Church comprehended their cardinal principles of civil and ecclesiastical rule. But their moderate schemes were swept away in the vortex of the new combination, composed of the Independents and malcontents of the army. The Presbyterians had begun, and in fact completed, the national movement; had furnished leaders to the military; and, by a long series of resolute struggles in parliament, had defeated the tyrannical aims of the Stuarts. But the army had been their executive instrument, and it refused to disband, after consummating the purpose for which it had been called into existence. The military mostly consisted of respectable citizens and yeomen, who had risen in defence of public liberty, and were loth to leave the spoils of the victory they had bravely won to be shared by ambitious lawyers and divines. Hence the new junction of parties, and the measures of revolutionary violence by which the Presbyterians, favourable to the crown, were forcibly excluded from parliament, and the fraction of the Commons that remained enabled to sentence the unfortunate king to the scaffold.

Prior to this the Commons had resolved that the king's concessions afforded good grounds for proceeding to a settlement of the kingdom. The question was debated three days. At one time 340 members were present, and the House resolved, by 140 to 104, in favour of the resolution. Next day a strong detachment of the military repaired to Westminster; 41 members were seized in going to the House, and 160 more prevented from entering it. After this expurgation the House consisted

of only 150 members. So constituted, the Commons resolved, 1. That the people, under God, are the origin of all just power. 2. That the Commons in parliament, representing the people, have the supreme authority of the nation. 3. That whatever is enacted into law by the Commons has the force of law, and the nation is concluded thereby, though the consent of the king or House of Peers be not had thereto. After these extraordinary usurpations of power, the Commons passed an ordinance for the king's trial, naming therein 150 commissioners for the purpose.

Beyond this intimation of the mode of initiation of the Commonwealth, it is unnecessary to trespass upon matters of familiar history; but a reflection or two may be added on some of the general characteristics of the struggle between the king and the parliament.

The first observation that offers is on the conduct of the king, who, by indifference to impending consequences or irresistible fatality, appears to have been hurried onward to the last tragical issue. Political escapes had always been open to him; but he passed them by, and took no warning from the fate that plainly preluded his own in the violent death of his reliable friends, Strafford and Laud. His pertinacious resistance to the Commons, before the war, had become evidently futile, and had often ended in disgraceful or humiliating defeats. Even when discomfited in battle, and a prisoner, outlets for escape were frequent; but he would neither learn nor surrender anything. The Scots, in concert with the English Presbyterians, it is likely would have saved him, if he would in good faith have given up his idle contest for prelacy, and approved the Covenant.

It is probable that the obduracy of Charles had its origin in the high prerogative notions which throughout

had misled him. The notion that "kings can do no wrong" was much more prevalent in his time than at present, and, no doubt, was entertained by him. He never thought that the Republicans would have the boldness to bring him to trial, and make him judicially responsible. When arraigned before the High Commission Court, he protested stoutly against its jurisdiction. Indeed, if I am not mistaken, he was the first sovereign in modern Europe who had been so dealt with. The example, as already remarked, doubtless gave strength to the new government, and spread abroad a deep impression of the daring character of the English; but being an extreme measure, and in violation of a popular prejudice, it assuredly helped to bring about the Restoration. "I am afraid," says Godwin, "that the day which saw Charles perish on the scaffold, rendered the restoration of his family certain."

A second reflection refers to the contrast between the assumed basis of political rights at the period of the civil war, and at present. In the seventeenth century claims were founded on authority, on prescription, grant, charter, or statute; now they rest almost solely on interest, on the amount and distribution of the numbers, wealth, and intelligence of the community. At the former period civil rights were a case of law; they are now an inquisition of statistics. An example will best illustrate this difference.

At the assembling of the third parliament of Charles, March 17th, 1628, and which preferred the celebrated Petition of Right to the king, it was estimated that the aggregate wealth of its members was three times greater than that of the House of Lords. It was also remarked that many of the popular members were followed up to London by a train of well-doing hardy freeholders, far more numerous than the train of any of the peers. In

the retinues of the nobility everything proclaimed decaying aristocracy, and the wreck of feudal sway and magnificence. Accordingly when the civil war had commenced, no peer, however wealthy or high in station, could bring into the field a regiment, or even a company, of willing vassals; all had been emancipated, and the meanest hind was free to choose between the King and Commons. These were evidences of social transition, and of the evolution of new interests from the successful pursuits of commerce and industry, well deserving consideration in the allocation of political authority. But they do not seem to have fixed attention, or at least their weight appears not to have been prominently urged by the popular representatives arrayed against the sovereign. The statesmen of the Commonwealth preferred their claims less as resting on any broad or just views of national justice or utility, than as legal or scriptural rights derived from the constitution and biblical dispensation.

After the king's execution, and the ascendancy of the Independents had been established, the Scriptures became the sole charter and standard of authority in government, laws, franchises, and morals. The sacerdotal power became supreme, but without a priesthood. All alike were held equal, subordinate to divine prescription, to govern, to judge, and interpret. These theocratic attributes of the Commonwealth will, however, best appear after briefly passing through the later phases of the republican interregnum under the Long Parliament and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

CHAPTER X.

COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND.

Periods of Constitutional Changes.—Novel Attempts under the Commonwealth.—Abolition of the House of Lords.—Religious and Social Excesses.—Moral Austerities of the Puritans.—Arbitrary Acts and Self-seeking of the Long Parliament; its Energy and Public Services.—Summary of the Character of the Commons.—Exemplary Conduct of the Army.—Influence on the National Character of the Commonwealth.—Beginning of Newspapers.—Pamphlet Writing.

THE progress of the British constitution has often formed a theme of ingenious analogy. It has been likened to a tree that, from a humble germ, has expanded into magnificent growth and foliage. Perhaps a closer assimilation may be traced to the recent theory promulgated of animal creation ; and that the advance of government, like that of our species, has been by successive developments through inferior stages of political trial, until it has reached its existing condition of justice, completeness, and high intellectual improvement.

Three eras of transitive progress have been defined by the writers of the “ Pictorial History.” In the middle of the eleventh century the Norman conquest subverted the comparatively free old Saxon institutions, and completed the establishment of feudalism: in the middle of the thirteenth the insurrection of the barons against Henry III. put an end to the exclusive domination of the crown and nobility, by introducing the principle of popular representation : in the middle of the fifteenth the wars of the Roses almost annihilated the power of the aristocracy, and left

the crown and the Commons to contend for supremacy: in the middle of the seventeenth century the success of the Great Rebellion, as Clarendon terms it, decided that contest in favour of the Commons; but the issue of the struggle being temporarily set aside by the Restoration, the failure in constitutional progress was partly remedied in 1688: but it was reserved for the nineteenth century more nearly to complete the great work, by a wide extension of popular representation, thereby making supreme the Commons of the realm.

Hence it appears that every second century, since the foundation of the monarchy, has witnessed the consummation of a great revolution in the political state of England. During the first two centuries after the Conquest, the government was a monarchy balanced by an aristocracy, or a system in which, according to the character of the king and other varying conditions, sometimes the crown had the upper hand, sometimes the barons; that for the next two centuries the Commons, consisting of the landholders and gentry, and the mercantile and monied community, came in for a share in the government, but rather as auxiliaries than principals alternately of the crown and the aristocracy; and that for the third space of about equal duration, the power of the nobility, as a distinct body in the state, being almost wholly destroyed, the government came to be either a simple monarchy under the Tudors, or a simple oligarchy of the middle classes under the Stuarts, after the Commons had succeeded in the mastery of the crown.

In these fluctuations of power, with the sole exception of the last, none of the three elements which formed a part of the government ever became wholly extinct; they always continued to exist, exercising sometimes a weaker, sometimes a stronger force in the state, but never

wholly disappearing from it. The convulsions of the seventeenth century, however, form quite an exception to the antecedent course of political oscillations. They were not an attempt to balance one constitutional element against another by reducing the power of the crown or aristocracy within narrower bounds, but to expel them entirely from the frame of the government, and establish on their exclusion the one and indivisible House of Commons, which had heretofore been the most subjective and least potent of the three estates of the kingdom. Undoubtedly this was reform, and something more, — a vigorous effort at a root-and-branch revolution.

Under this aspect the novel and vivid agitation of the Civil War forms one of the most instructive episodes of British history. It was an attempt to govern England by a system of rule entirely different from any which it had experienced ; and the experiments tried for this purpose are of inestimable worth, both from originality of conception, and the fulness of detail with which the record of them has been transmitted. Not the least useful of the lessons taught by the vicissitudes of the Commonwealth, is the not very rare example that mankind will mostly, whether acting singly or collectively, try to pervert the course of events they inaugurate to their own purposes, and of which the domination of the Long Parliament and the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell afford cogent examples. But from this tendency it by no means follows that it is a question of indifference to the public by whom the powers of civil government are exercised. Men may be incapable as well as unworthy, ignorant or instructed, careful or reckless of the public weal. The last, at least, was not the reproach of the Commonwealth statesmen ; they were true and earnest men, intent both on the vindication of the freedom of the

country and its advancement in greatness and well being. Such redeeming excellence is unquestionably the highest that rulers can aspire to, and will appear in the sequel in the vigorous impulse given to national advancement.

On the day of the king's execution a proclamation appeared, declaring it treason to give any person the title of king without the assent of parliament; at the same time was published the previous vote of January 4th, that the supreme authority of the nation resided in the representatives of the people. The House of Lords, uncertain of their position under this ultra regimen, sent a message to the Commons, desiring a conference on the new settlement. Of this no notice was taken, but within a few days the Commons resolved that "the House of Peers in parliament is useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished." A new council of state was appointed, consisting of thirty-nine members: it superseded the previous committee of government, and exercised all the executive functions of the state. Serjeant Bradshaw, who presided at the king's trial, became president of the council, and the poet Milton secretary of foreign correspondence. New money was coined, and a new great seal made; the commissions of the judges and magistrates renewed, and the Court of King's Bench was styled the Common Bench. The Church was next assailed by the abolition of episcopacy. The crown and church lands were sold or sequestered for the use of the state. To renounce prelacy and the liturgy were the only terms on which, agreeably with Presbyterian dictation, the parochial clergy were allowed to retain their benefices.

All this destruction was the work of about six months, in which the monarchy, aristocracy, church, and judiciary of the kingdom were laid prostrate. The excite-

ment of the period naturally gave rise to some other extravagances, and a host of new doctrines and systems in religion and social life began to be promulgated. Of the former description were the Millennium proselytes, and the Fifth Monarchy Men, who considered that the period had arrived for the commencement of the terrestrial reign of Christ. The Levellers were another singularity of the time ; they held, that the earth being the people's farm, it ought to be held in common ; and upon this principle they began to cultivate a piece of waste land in Surrey, when they were dispersed by a troop of Fairfax's horse. A larger body of "diggers," as they were termed, were surprised at Burford by Cromwell, and some of the principal of them executed. The new governing powers were resolved not to have any competitors in extremes, so exclusively intent were they on the realisation of their own religious ideal of civil order.

The measures of the Commons were not all of a like extraordinary tendency. They evinced their good sense by ordering that all process of law, patents, commissions, indictments, and judgments, be in the English language only, and that they be written in an ordinary legible hand, not in a court hand. It was in politics and moral legislation that they most erred. Adultery was made a capital crime for the first offence, and illicit sexual intercourse a misdemeanour. Their gloomy enthusiasm carried them to the most ridiculous austerities. Nearly all recreations were suspended by their severities ; horse-racing, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting were prohibited as the greatest enormities. Unfortunately, in these it was the sport, not the brutality, that gave offence. Maypole days and other holidays were abolished, and amusements of all kinds on the Sabbath strictly prohibited ; so that no opportunities were left for wholesome relaxation.

But these ordinances were with difficulty enforced, and the people were resolved to be merry when they pleased, not when parliament prescribed to them. Such futile asceticism only begot hypocrisy, and this must be the usual result from mistaken efforts at an imaginary perfectibility.

Despite of outward seemings under the ascendancy of the Presbyterians, the Long Parliament became unpopular from its corrupt practices and arbitrary acts. At the commencement of the civil war a self-denying ordinance had been passed; but this was soon suffered to become obsolete, and the most lucrative offices were filled by the members. The taxes they imposed were oppressive; the sums levied far exceeded the burdens imposed in any former period; unavoidable exigencies may have been pleaded for these extraordinary imposts, but what rendered the levies most revolting was the lavishness of the members on themselves. The sum of 300,000*l.*, it has been affirmed, they openly took for their own use; while the pay of the army and navy was falling into arrear. The power of the county committees formed an additional grievance. These tribunals could sequester, fine, imprison, and corporally punish, without law or remedy. During the war their Star Chamber powers had been excused on the plea of necessity, but the people were reduced to despair when they saw neither end put to their duration nor bounds to their authority.

Such abuses and oppressions damaged in popular estimation the character of the Long Parliament. Still during the four years of the Commonwealth it carried on the government with the energy and creative ability inherent in republican institutions. It raised the resources by which Cromwell was enabled to subdue Ireland and Scotland, and defeat the royalists at Worcester. It is to

this assembly the nation is indebted for the commencement of its naval renown and superiority. Its chief errors were a failure of adroitness in the attempt to disband the army, its endeavours to prolong indefinitely its sittings, and the religious semblances by which it sought to veil its proceedings. Disgusted alike by the cant and tyranny of the Commons, the people beheld without regret their power abruptly annihilated by Oliver Cromwell. This crafty leader saw their errors with satisfaction, that they paved the way for his sinister designs, and that he might safely hasten the term of their dissolution. Accordingly he kept alive and aggravated the discontents of the military, and, by artfully working on the ignorance and passions of the army, made it the unsuspecting instrument of his ambition.

Although dissolved by the violence it had partly provoked from the aberrations of some of its members for personal ends, and which exceptions are inseparable from every public assembly, it would be unjust to dismiss the Long Parliament without a more distinct discrimination of its general merits and services. It gave, as before observed, a forcible impulse onward; and its spirit and example have never been dead, but always continued to animate and direct an energetic portion of the population. Our minds are formed by association with the examples of history, and the parliamentarians have bequeathed some noble models. At the outset their stand was for the public liberties: in this resistance they never flinched; no danger, no threats, no ruinous fines or cruel punishments, could make them yield; and, when driven to the last resort of arms, they did not in words only, which are easily used, but in deeds fearlessly stake their lives and fortunes on the cast. Triumphant on this issue, they certainly administered stern justice to the chief offender,

but abstinence in capital punishment had not become the characteristic of the age. Their aim was to do right and fear not, and for guidance they sought the highest counsel, by preaching, fasting, and prayer unceasingly. In justice and morals they emulated the high Roman standard, or that of the saints and martyrs who sought to subordinate self to a zealous devotion to the commonweal, or interests more exalted. From revolutionary bloodthirstiness they were entirely free; seven victims only making the entire expiatory atonement that wound up the civil war*; an example of forgiveness unparalleled in any other national strife of corresponding intensity and magnitude.

The age of Chivalry and the Crusades produced knights of unsullied renown, but the Commonwealth had defenders not inferior in lustre. Its army, under the able training and organisation, and emboldened by the daring example, of its leaders, Fairfax, Cromwell, and Ireton, became the finest in Europe. Although volunteers in the cause, mostly drawn from the vocations of trade and industry, they were as invincible in battle as the best regular forces; and were superior to them in this, that their most signal victories did not corrupt them into license. The moral bearing of the military formed a noble trait, and they maintained it inviolate after their services had ceased to be required. Mr. Macaulay observes of them, that "the royalists themselves confessed that in every department of honest industry the discarded warriors prospered beyond other men; that none were charged with theft or robbery; that none were heard to ask an alms; and that if a baker, a mason, or a waggoner,

* These were the execution of the Duke of Hamilton and the Lords Holland and Capel, with the Salisbury mutineers.

attracted notice by his diligence and sobriety, he was in all probability one of Oliver's old soldiers."*

The navy of England rose into not less distinction than the army under the inspiration of the Commonwealth. The two services, indeed, were then closely identified, and it was the custom for officers to serve in both the army and navy, as Generals Monk and Deane did under Admiral Blake in the terrible battles with Van Tromp in February 1653. In the Hollanders we encountered no unworthy rivals for the sovereignty of the seas, and their seamen in hardihood and experience were then the best in Europe. But the brave English after a rapid succession of battles, some dubious in results, and some absolute defeats, proved ultimately triumphant. The rapidity with which we recovered from naval disasters, and our fleets again rode defiant in the Channel, evince that the naval department had partaken of the general energy infused through the community by the excitement of the civil war. Patience under difficulties, resoluteness in action, sternness of purpose, with firm integrity and moral worth, were the qualities eminently brought out under the Commonwealth, and became fixed and inheritable attributes of the national character.

As the feelings of all had been roused, the energies evoked did not subside with the quarrel, but opened for themselves new channels of interest and occupation. Consequently it is to the concussions of the civil war that much of the power and resources immediately after displayed may be traced. The country for the first time began to know itself, and from this period may be dated its European importance in war and peace. The solemn trial and execution of the sovereign had awakened intense

* Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 154. 3rd edit.

interest abroad, and impressed upon foreigners a deep conviction of the stern justice and boldness of the national character.*

Next to this issue, the furious struggle with the Dutch for maritime supremacy revealed an extent of resources in fleets, combatants, commerce, and opulence never anticipated by the nations of the continent, nor perhaps by our own rulers. A writer, after the Restoration, says that at the time Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament, "the kingdom had arrived at the highest pitch of trade, wealth, and honour that any age ever yet knew." The increase of commercial wealth had the natural result of extending rural industry and augmenting the value of landed property. In 1621 the current price of land † had been no more than twelve years' purchase ; in 1666 it had risen from fourteen to sixteen years' purchase.

An event not remotely connected with the Commonwealth deserves to be noted. It is the first publication of newspapers. From the first day of the meeting of the Long Parliament, Nov. 3. 1640, may be dated the beginning of Journalism. The earliest English newspaper that has been discovered is a quarto pamphlet of a few leaves, comprehending a summary of parliamentary proceedings for an entire year ; it is entitled "The Diurnal Occurrences or Daily Proceedings of Both Houses in this great and happy Parliament, from 3rd Nov. 1640, to 3rd Nov. 1641." More than one hundred newspapers with different titles appear to have been published between

* Charles Fox says, "He who has read, and, still more, he who has heard in conversation, discussions upon this subject by foreigners, must have perceived, that, even in the minds of those who condemn the act, the impression made by it has been far more that of respect and admiration than that of disgust and horror." — *Introd. History of James II.*

† Chalmer's Estimate, p. 45.

this date and the death of the king, and upwards of eighty others between that event and the Restoration.* Occasional papers were issued after the civil war began, limited to local or special occurrences; as, "News from Hull," "Truths from York," "Tidings from Ireland." The more regular newspapers were published weekly at first, then twice or thrice in a week. The impatience of the people soon led to the publication of daily papers, and Spalding, the Aberdeen annalist, mentions that in December 1642 "daily papers came from London, called 'Diurnal Occurrences,' declaring what is done in parliament." In the Scottish campaign of 1650, the army of Charles and that of Oliver Cromwell each carried its printer along with it to report progress, and of course to exaggerate successes.† It is from this circumstance that the first introduction of newspapers into Scotland has been attributed to Oliver Cromwell.

Besides the newspapers, the great religious and political questions of this agitated period were contested in a cloud of separate pamphlets, which appear to have been read as generally and eagerly. It has been stated that the number of such pamphlets printed in the twenty years from the meeting of the Long Parliament was full 30,000, being at the rate of four or five new ones daily. Where are they now, and their host of busy penmen?

* Pictorial History of England, vol. iii. p. 615.

† Jesse's Memoirs of the Stuarts, vol. iii. p. 45.

CHAPTER XI.

PROTECTORATE OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

Ultimate Prize of Heroes; Cromwell, like others, sought the Reward of Public Services.—His astonishing Military Career; Victories of Dunbar and Worcester; Conqueror of Three Kingdoms.—His temporary Quietude.—Dissolves the Long Parliament and Council of State; Firmness of Serjeant Bradshaw.—Failures of Oliver in Attempts at Parliamentary Government.—His restless desire for Kingship.—Scruples of the House of Lords.—Energetic Government of the Protector.—His general Character.—Question of the Predominant Religious or Political Bearing of the Civil War.—Divisions of the Presbyterians and Independents.—Cromwell not Intolerant.—His Foreign Alliances.—Increasing Difficulties of his Position.—Conclusion of the Interregnum.—Lessons inculcated.

THE great leaders of mankind, not less than their humbler followers, seldom fail to make full appraisement of the public services they render. If they win victories, conquer new territories, or ride the whirlwind of civil commotion, they do not omit, in the sequel of their career, to call for ample compensation for the obligations of gratitude they may have imposed on nations. The histories of Julius Cæsar, of Oliver Cromwell, and Napoleon Bonaparte bear testimony to the truth of this conclusion. They all signalised themselves by heroic deeds, saved their country from imminent perils, and then, immediately opportunity offered, sought the highest reward by forcibly seizing the glittering prize of absolute power. It can hardly, however, be said with justice of these illustrious chiefs, that, in the first instance, they obtru-

sively challenged the preeminent distinction that awaited them; but that, in their primitive obscurity, they patiently abided their time, till they became a necessity of their age, and the urgency of the crisis, cooperating with antecedent demonstrations of fitness, brought the existing public want into meet companionship with the individual ambition it had fostered.

What is here propounded appears fairly applicable to the development of Oliver Cromwell. The quiet and nothingness of his personal history up to middle life gave not any indication of his future public capabilities. Hardly an anecdote or incident has been recorded of him that betrays the rough diamond destined to shine with such surpassing lustre; and the darkness of his early progress is almost as profound as the entire biography of the great Shakspeare. But when the condition of the times became favourable to his peculiar genius, his aspirations expanded, and his extraordinary abilities became so indisputable as to transcend all rival claims to the foremost place.

Consequently the accession of Cromwell to the Protectorship may be considered the natural, if not unavoidable, sequel to his zealous and matchless public exploits. The Commonwealth had not been unmindful of his devoted and successful toils. All that it could bestow it had spontaneously awarded to him. He was made captain-general of its armies; the royal palaces of St. James's, Whitehall, and Hampton Court were assigned for his abode; and a munificent revenue granted him. His deserts equalled, and perhaps, in his estimate, exceeded them all. He was the heroic subduer of three kingdoms. England, Scotland, and Ireland, in rapid sequence, had felt the edge of his conquering sword, and, for the first time in history, were united under one dominion. Ire-

land had been all but lost to the republic, Dublin and Derry alone remaining faithful. In one dreadful campaign Oliver overran it ; dead winter hardly stopped him. Forward he sped from Drogheda to Kilkenny, laying waste with Norman fury all around him. His march was bloody and unpitying, prompted, it may be, by the religious frenzy he had imbibed against papal idolators, or the policy of making a fierce example among a barbarous people.

His task, however, was completed. In ten months he was again in England. In the interim, Scotland had risen in favour of the royalists. Their chastisement was offered to Fairfax ; he accepted, then declined the office from Presbyterian sympathies. He was a generous, brave, and skilful leader, and had greatly distinguished himself in the civil war ; but under the influence, it is said, of Lady Fairfax, shrunk back from the king's trial and execution. Had he maintained his popular position in the army, and been successful in Scotland, he might have intercepted Cromwell in his lofty career.

The difficulties Oliver had to encounter in Scotland were immense. One only of them would have sufficed to overwhelm an ordinary man. He was greatly outnumbered by the Scotch ; they were wary in strategy, and resolute in battle. For awhile he was at fault, but kept a watchful eye on their movements ; and it was only when Lesley had the imprudence to forego the vantage ground of the heights of Dunbar that the English general despaired his opportunity and the Lord's deliverance. The mist that had hung over the field cleared off, the sun burst forth, and the hymn of victory began :—

“ O Lord our God, arise !
Scatter our enemies,
And make them fall.”

The invincible Ironsides did the rest: in their coats of mail, they fought like demons with the pike and the butt-ends of their muskets, the deadly bayonet not having come into use. 3000 of the enemy slain and 10,000 prisoners were the trophies of this bloody day.

Pending this arduous campaign Cromwell had a severe ague, that held him two months, relieved only by tortuous theological disputes with Presbyterian divines. Upon his recovery he crossed the Forth, and advanced as far north as Perth. It was here news reached him of the sudden advance in an opposite direction of the royalists into England. He quickly followed, leaving General Monk to finish the settlement of Scotland. The crowning victory of Worcester closed his military triumphs, and, unlike the career of many warriors, it closed unchequered by a reverse.

For eighteen months after Cromwell appears to have rested from his labours without taking a prominent part in public affairs. He was not idle, however, in scheming. Whitelocke not favouring his project of kingship, Lord Broghill, Pierpoint, Sir Charles Wolsey, and Thurloe, his secretary, became his confidential advisers.

Meanwhile the parliament was urging on with much energy and resources the Dutch war, the glories of which, however, failed to reconcile the people to the heavy taxes it required. Fiscal difficulties increased by the army, at the instigation of Cromwell, petitioning for its arrears of pay; they were said to be impatient; and they next prayed for dissolution. These embarrassments, cooperating with the popular impression that the Commons meant to render their power permanent, and the selfishness of some of them, made the requisite crisis for Oliver's inroad. The well-known military violence followed, and the famous Long Parliament,

which for twelve years had energetically defended and next invaded the public liberties, fell by the parricidal hands of its champion.

On the same day, in the afternoon, the council of state at Derby House was dispersed. Bradshaw had just taken the chair when Cromwell entered and told them that if they were there as private individuals, they were welcome; but if as the council of state, they must know that the parliament was dissolved, and with it the council. "Sir," replied Bradshaw, "we have heard what you did at the House this morning, and before many hours all England will know it. But, sir, you are mistaken to think that the parliament is dissolved. No power under heaven can dissolve them but themselves. Therefore take you notice of that." The council then withdrew.

All government was thus deposed, and transferred to Cromwell and his council of officers. It was the sword alone that ruled; but neither the needful taxes could be raised nor the civil administration carried on unaided by more capable auxiliaries. The forms of free government were at least indispensable, and accordingly Cromwell summoned 139 representatives for England, six for Wales, six for Ireland, and five for Scotland. Upon these he professed to devolve the entire power of the state. About 120 met at Whitehall July 4. 1653. They were to exercise their powers during fifteen months, and then nominate their successors. The character and composition of this gathering, and the practical usefulness of its legislative views, have been unfairly depreciated. "They were," as Mr. Lingard observes, "men of independent fortunes, and of intelligence, bating the prevalent fanaticism."* Many of the measures they

* History of England, vol. xi. p. 187.

suggested have been subsequently adopted. One was for transferring the ceremony of marriage and the registry of births and burials from clergymen to laymen. Resolutions were passed for consolidating the various branches of the revenue into one treasury; for rendering legal procedure less dilatory and expensive; for giving relief in cases of insolvency; for the abolition of tithes and advowsons, considering it contrary to reason that without special fitness a private person should have power to purchase the right to impose a spiritual guide on his neighbours; they even proposed the consolidation of the statute law and law reports, and the abolition of the Court of Chancery. Such radical changes alarmed the clergy and lawyers; and Oliver, finding the security of his dictatorship more identified with the support of the partisans of abuse than of reform, contrived to get rid of the calumniated assembly.

General Lambert and the military council formed the subservient tools with which Cromwell at the commencement ostensibly shared the government. It was by this body the Instrument of Government was promulgated, in which the entire government was declared to reside in a single person as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth; the office to be elective by his council. It had other provisions,—that a parliament should be called every three years, and of which every one should be an elector if worth 200*l.*, and of good principles. Some of the small boroughs were excluded from representation, and new ones enfranchised. Representatives to be men of integrity, of which the Protector was to be the judge. All denominations of Christians were tolerated, except the disciples of popery and prelacy. The chief officers of state were to be elective by parliament, or, if not sitting, appointed by the Protector.

Some of these provisions appeared plausible, but the subtle Oliver always reserved to himself the right of interpretation of doubtful terms, and of direct intervention, or an obstructive veto on the primary agency of the constituent bodies. All his arts and blandishments failed to overcome the scruples of Bradshaw, Haslerig, Ludlow, Scot, and Vane, and other stanch republicans, who steadily refused to subscribe to autocratical power in a single person. When the Commons became refractory or deviated into undesirable inquiries, the Lord Protector dismissed the parliament with as little ceremony as a court martial. He tried four during his six years' rule, and at his death meditated a fifth experiment. The difficulty he experienced in finding a representative body, however constituted, to sanction his usurpation, attests the unpopularity of his government, and the generally diffused sentiment in favour of a more constitutional administration. This sentiment gathered strength, and became most formidable in the last year of the Protectorship.

Cromwell's restless desire was for the kingly title, in which vain aspiration he had few or no supporters among his sincere well-wishers. Royalists, with a sinister purpose, affected to favour the design. The influential body of Presbyterians, and his old friends the Independents, alike opposed him. Members of his own family tried to dissuade him; but the most discouraging resistance came from the army, who, directed by Lambert, uttered threats of defection, if any attempt was made to reestablish the monarchy they had subverted. He was gratified, however, by the pomp of a regal inauguration as Lord Protector, and the recal of the House of Lords. Both Houses met, and the Commons being summoned up stairs by the black rod, Oliver opened the parliament in

the accustomed royal style of “ My lords and gentlemen of the House of Commons.” Being indisposed, he made only a short speech, but ordered his lord-keeper, Fiennes, to deliver more fully his sentiments. The lower house, however, had become less manageable than their predecessors, and evinced a more independent spirit. They admitted the excluded members, and in their “ Petition and Advice,” to which the Protector assented, they claimed an exclusive jurisdiction over their own privileges. They exclaimed against the recal of the “ other house ” as they termed it, and even questioned the Protector’s authority to summon it. The lords had assembled to the number of sixty ; among them were several gentlemen of ancient family, and some of the colonels and officers of the army ; but of the nobility, the great majority of whom continued steadfast in their loyalty, none sat in the house except Lord Eure : the Earl of Warwick, though allied by marriage to Cromwell, refused to sit with Colonel Hewson and Colonel Pride, the first having been a shoemaker, and the other a drayman. The hereditary pride of the English nobility at this period seems to have exceeded that in France under corresponding revolutionary transitions ; the ancient French noblesse not disdaining to meet on equal terms the marshals of Napoleon’s empire, most of whom were of as humble origin as Colonels Pride and Hewson.

It was the last attempt at a formal reconstruction of the constitution, and a more complete failure than preceding ones. The new parliament sat only fourteen days, when it was dissolved by the Protector, who in evident chagrin declared that he had rather be a shepherd than carry on so impracticable a government. It again left him alone in the glory of despotism, alarmed by royalist plots, republican discontents, and threatening pamphlets.

One of the most daring was entitled “Killing no Murder,” generally ascribed to Colonel Titus, but which, according to Secretary Thurloe, was written by Colonel Sexby, a stanch commonwealthman. The devotion of the army had originated the Protectorate, and continued its only reliable support. Like all power grasped by violence, it could only be maintained by violence; and Cromwell stopped at no illegality likely to strengthen his hold. His spies were everywhere, and enabled him to frustrate all plots at home and abroad. Virtually England was governed by martial law, by its division into twelve districts each under a major-general, with unlimited powers, from which there was no appeal but to the Protector. Arbitrary imprisonments in the Tower, upon short written orders without formal warrant or expressed cause of commitment, were practised. The disaffected were punished by confiscations, by placing them judicially and fiscally at the mercy of Oliver’s military satraps; frequently they were sold for slaves to the West Indies.

These despotic resorts were not the wantonness of tyranny, but the indispensable guarantees of unlawful power. Naturally Cromwell inclined to mercy and forgiveness rather than vindictive cruelty. His position made him a tyrant; a sanguine temperament a religious enthusiast; policy and ambition a wily dissembler. The return of peace had been doubly disadvantageous to him, as it is to all usurpations founded on the sword; first by affording leisure to investigate his title; and secondly, by the reduction of the army and all other establishments connected with war lessening the ascendancy of military authorities. Had his life been prolonged, it is doubtful whether he would have been able long to withstand the hourly increasing difficulties of his position. He was the centre and sole support of his system; and men acquiesced

in it, as likely to be a short-lived evil, from deference to his wonderful abilities, gratitude for his great services to the Commonwealth, and probably from the difficulty — a common dilemma in civil convulsions — of concurring in any remedy better than the disease.

Apart from the absolutism which Oliver had established, his history offers redeeming qualities. In his private relations he was unexceptionable ; a dutiful son, an affectionate parent and husband. He was frank, jocular, and affable ; brave, just, and magnanimous ; no hypocrite, I suspect, in piety, but more of a dupe to the prevalent mania. His great impeachment was the common one of statesmen in not preferring the public weal to his own aggrandisement. His capacity for governing men and moulding them to his purposes, all allow to have been extraordinary ; but his abilities were more executive than projective. Boldness, energy, decision, and resource in great danger were the active talents which placed him in the first rank of military leaders, and in war was his unquestioned distinction. He was an adjunct of the times, the natural product of his age. Most political commotions elicit some master spirits qualified to fashion and direct them. Had Cromwell lived, or been otherwise gifted than he was ; had he been more of a philosopher and less of an enthusiast ; or had he been more of a legislator and less of the dexterous politician, he would not have achieved his elevation. Appearing during a civil war inflamed by religious conflicts, he came out in season, and his remarkable but peculiar talents of subtlety, fanaticism, daring, and resoluteness, found an apt field for exercise and display.*

One characteristic of undoubted genius Cromwell dis-

* Partly from the author's British History, 5th edit., 1847.

played, though little noticed by biographers. It consisted in the masterly example he has left of the art of subverting established authority. He has had many imitators in this line of transcendental statesmanship, but few have improved on his model of usurpation. His first beginning was to earn a meritorious name by zeal and great services; next, to allow the ruling power to discredit itself by misgovernment, aiding the growing dissatisfaction by his own insidious artifices. The pear thus became ripe, the servant rose to be master, and bore away the fruit on the point of his sword, regardless of all claims save the right of the strongest.

It has been made a question whether a zeal for civil or religious freedom was strongest in the war against the king. The two hardly admitted of severance, the politics of each of the principal denominations being identified with their religion; they were twins, united though different, and went together, the Presbyterians coupling with their dogmas a limited monarchy, the Independents a republic. But as religion was the universal standard by which all things were estimated, it was doubtless paramount in affection in the struggles of parties. Religiously the rival sects differed less in principle than in degree. The Presbyterians were for discarding bishops and the liturgy, the retrenchment of ceremonies, and for giving a more pastoral cast to the priestly office. The enthusiasm of the Independents carried them further; they were for the entire abolition of ecclesiastical government, disdained creeds, neglected ceremony, and contended for the sufficiency of individual judgment in matters of conscience. Their zeal tended to anarchy; the moderation of the Presbyterians to order. The greater energy of the Independents, their popular appeals and compulsory exclusion of their rivals from parliament,

gave them an ascendancy ; but they lost it at the Restoration by the union of the Presbyterians with the royalists.

In one exemplary quality both denominations were deficient, and failed to make progress ; for though the country was agitated by them for twenty years, neither became liberal enough to permit the free exercise of religion, except by their own proselytes. Presbyterians were just as intolerant, when in power, of popery and prelacy, and the Independents of Quakers and Unitarians, as the papists had been of Lollards and Lutherans. Yet the private judgment claimed by the Independents comprehended in its application general toleration. Cromwell himself, who favoured the Independents, was of a tolerant disposition ; and the Catholics never had suffered so little molestation as under his protectorship. He even tolerated Judaism, by permitting the settlement of the Jews in Eng~~land~~, after an exclusion of nearly three centuries, in spite of the denunciations of some bigoted churchmen and lawyers. Sometimes he would deplore the animosities caused among the people by religious dissensions, and would be urged by zealots to put an end to them by enforcing uniformity of creed ; but he excused himself by saying that his power in the nation was only that of a constable, to keep the peace among all parties and misuse none. His moderation was creditable to his political sagacity amidst the prevalent divisions, tending to neutralise the hostilities of sects to his government, if it did not conciliate the steadfast support of any.

In another direction the Protector evinced his shrewd practical sense : he was not remarkable for high intellectual acquirements, nor perhaps had naturally the habitual attention capable of them ; but his deficiencies did not render him insensible to the claims of genius and learning. He saved the two universities from being overrun by a

ruthless fanaticism. He founded a college at Durham ; purchased and presented to Dublin university the library of Archbishop Usher ; employed, patronised, or pensioned Milton, Waller, and Andrew Marvel ; and offered a secretaryship to Hobbes, the philosopher.

The vigilance and energy of Cromwell's domestic government has been universally admitted ; but on the wisdom of his foreign policy opinions have been divided. It has been urged that he ought to have formed an alliance with Spain in preference to France, a growing rival power in close neighbourhood ; but, on the other hand, a war with Spain has been held politic, by exposing to our arms her transatlantic possessions. Probably true policy would have consisted in abstaining from an offensive alliance against either belligerent, and the maintenance of neutrality. But Cromwell repeated the errors of Charles I. Both tried to govern without parliaments, and both plunged the country into foreign wars which entailed expenses that mainly contributed to embarrass their governments. The war certainly extended the martial repute of the country, made its alliance to be sedulously courted, and procured for it the temporary possession of Dunkirk and permanently that of Jamaica. The pirates of Tunis were chastised by Admiral Blake, their ships destroyed, and they were compelled to release English captives. After a thirty years' struggle, the Dutch States yielded to our naval superiority, agreed to strike the flag to English ships, and to indemnify England for losses during the war. If to these conclusions be added the assistance rendered by Cromwell to Protestants abroad, and the mastery obtained at home over Scotland and Ireland, it is impossible but foreign states must have been deeply impressed with the high pitch of greatness the country had reached at the close of the Protectorate.

Arrived at the termination of the Interregnum, a few remarks may be added to those which concluded the two preceding chapters, on its more general characteristics, and their bearing on the progress of the nation. The first observation is, that the political vicissitudes of this memorable passage of British history could not have failed to have been eminently instructive to the community. Bacon had not long previously recommended that in the culture of natural philosophy theory should be abandoned, and truth be sought solely by actual experiment. The philosopher only contemplated the application of his inductive method to physical science; but it was practically applied to the affairs of the nation. The era of the Civil War was decidedly an experimental age; experimental in government, religion, laws, and morals. All that had previously existed — king, peers, church, precedents, ancient customs and usages — were cast into the crucible, and from the fusion the people left free to draw new and more perfect models, if such could be found, of civil life and political government.

And what was the result? Nothing,—nothing in permanence. All perished that was institutional or meant to be organic. Still the gain was immense in knowledge, if not in practice; in the knowledge of what was possible and what was impracticable from incompatibility with human nature, old established forms, habits, and traditional associations.

All parties experienced the danger of extremes. The king was the first transgressor, and sought, by the aid of the Church, the entire subversion, under the pretext of prerogatives, of the liberties of the nation. The Presbyterians checked the progress of the court and the clergy; but fell from their extravagant austerities, hypocrisy, and selfishness. The political market being free to all,

they were outbid in their overweening pretensions by the Independents, who, amidst their fanatical dreams, fell from the same vice of conceit and self-seeking. Their fall was the more ignominious ; for they were crushed by the mutiny of their own servants, and became at once the victims of the wiles of an adventurer and the contempt of the people.

Cromwell's attempt at government was the most successful and lasting. But his great abilities could not supply defect of title in an age in which rights had long been the sole object of strife, and that undoubtedly had the rare merit of holding justice paramount and expediency nought. Moreover his violence had been a common wrong ; all had been despoiled, and all naturally rose to claim their own immediately the strong hand and iron will of the Protector were removed.

The eventful story of the Great Rebellion ends as it began. Repeated disappointments generated universal indifference. The government of one and the government of many had been tried, — both proved unsatisfactory. Further experimental trials seemed useless. Novelty had been exhausted, and the people could only retrace their steps. The Restoration followed, and a restoration it proved ; but with aggravations in lieu of improvements. Popery and arbitrary power, however, the people would not endure. They rose again, but in a different spirit. Unlike the Stuarts, who had neither learned nor forgotten anything, the people had learned a great deal. Consequently they aimed at less, and accomplished more. Moderation in political advances became the national characteristic. This, in truth, was the priceless resulting lesson of the Civil War, and was successfully exemplified in the next great political movement of 1688.

It must be conceded then, I think, that the great struggle begun by the famous Long Parliament did not prove wholly fruitless. Nothing was lost, and there was a substantial gain. Even the material prosperity of the country was not impeded ; it was invigorated and expanded. There was moral gain also. Heroic examples had been afforded, and severe trials endured. Under the quiet of Laudian churchism and Stuart despotism there could have been no progress, and the nation must have remained vile and emasculated, as other European states did under a like regimen. In lieu of such fixity it continued uninterruptedly its career in civilisation, till it became the model and guide to other nations.

CHAPTER XII.

ASCENDANCY OF THE PURITANS.

Religious and Political Opinions. — Distinction between the Reformed and Roman Churches. — Characteristics of Sects and Parties. — Rise and Supremacy of the Puritans. — Religious Extravagances under the Commonwealth. — Intolerance of the Long Parliament. — Puritans neglect Science, and incompetent Judges of Moral Conduct. — Disqualified for Political Government. — Errors of the Pilgrim Fathers.

CORRESPONDING necessities ordinarily control the vicissitudes of political and sacerdotal government. When men are tired of anarchy they usually succumb to despotism ; when religious divisions appear interminable, the obvious anodyne is the establishment of a papal or convocational supremacy. But irresponsible power tends

to corrupt the possessor; and to meet this evil, constitutional forms are employed in the state, and the check of an established creed and ritual in the Church. Civil and religious liberty, having once begun to expand, may continue its undulatory movement till it finally issue in the form of republicanism in the temporal, and of independency or congregational worship in the religious, world.

These are correlative and indissoluble conditions in the cyclical revolution of secular and spiritual dogmas. Contemporarily there cannot be civil freedom and religious slavery; nor conversely is religious liberty compatible with civil bondage, since they reciprocally act upon, fashion, and interpret each other. Hence it is that monarchy has always been found the natural ally and most congenial with a dominant ecclesiastical establishment; just as independency is the associate of republicanism, or a wild democracy of an erratic fanaticism.

The history of England under the Stuarts and pending the Commonwealth affords practical illustration of these general conclusions. It is essential, however, to a full and correct apprehension of them, as well as to the clear development of the subject of the present chapter, to describe the relative positions of the different religious bodies that sprang from the Protestant Reformation, and their conflicting doctrines and social influence, pending the Interregnum and under the Stuarts. By this preliminary description the reader will be put in possession of the battle-field, and of the capabilities and resources of the combatants. He will thus be enabled to judge for himself of the competitive claims of Protestantism and Popery; of the tendencies of individual inquiry, unchecked by superior authority and intelligence, in contrast with an established or infallible church, that without

demur, controversy, or appeal, once prescribed the European faith and ritual. In the corruptions that have been unsparingly depicted of the Popedom in its meridian strength, it has not been concealed that it had one redeeming excellence to plead in the maintenance, during eight centuries, of religious peace in the Christian world. This benefit was at length purchased at a vastly disproportionate price, in the revolting abuses and impostures it comprehended, in the abject slavery of the human mind, in the prostration of its energies, and in the prescription of an impassable limit to social advancement. We shall now state the converse, and practically exhibit the opposite extreme, as exemplified during the eventful period when the British monarchy was suspended — when religious toleration was almost unstinted — and every one was free to think, to interpret, and utter, according to the endless and diversified suggestions of individual impulse and intelligence.

Romanism admits of no dissent or nonconformity; it is spiritual absolutism without check or accountability. Under it the power of the church, whether exercised by the pope or a general council, is held to be supreme and infallible. It may, if it chooses, profess to found its decrees upon Scripture, tradition, custom, reason, or any other authority that it may consider creditable or convenient; but the Catholic and supreme church assumes to be above all these considerations, and to be the sole interpreter of the will of the Deity to man, without liability to be called to account, questioned, or contradicted by any appellate jurisdiction.

In the Protestant countries which seceded from Romanism, a national churchism was mostly sought to be substituted in place of the spiritual universalism of the Popedom. Another discrepancy distinguished the new

or sectarian churches from Popery. They claimed a like ecclesiastical supremacy within their local jurisdiction as the parent church from which they had separated, but subordinate to the Scriptures. Popery acknowledged no allegiance; no charter or written constitution: it was the sole unchallenged expounder of the Divine will, irrespective of all law and authority. With the reformed churches the case was different. According to them the Scriptures contained all the theological truth necessary to be believed, and upon this authority their liturgies and doctrines must be founded. Subject to this restriction, they claimed a not less exclusive infallibility than Rome herself; of the language and meaning of the Scriptures they claimed to be the sole judge, and their interpretations to be above all doubt, dissent, or controversy.

These were precisely the bases upon which both the Presbyterian church of Scotland and the episcopal church of England were established. But Independency let in another principle. Like the churches of England and Scotland, it acknowledged the Scriptures to be the sole guide; but it conceded to every individual an equal right of interpreting their language and application. But against the competency of private judgment, the established churches held as stoutly against Independency, as they maintained against Popery the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

In this way religious freedom expanded after Catholicism was invaded by Protestantism. Under the Papacy it was pure despotism, and the sovereign will of the pontiff the supreme arbiter. The reformed churches introduced *constitutionalism*, and the Scriptures were the admitted charter of ecclesiastical power. Independency established republicanism, in which all were made alike equal — alike eligible and competent; in short, in which

every man was admitted to be an infallible church in his own individuality.

But a lower deep remained, a wider and more undefinable spread of religious freedom. Fanaticism reared its head and erected a new standard of faith distinct from all its predecessors. Conceding to national churchism the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and to Independency the competency of individual interpretation, Fanaticism, in addition, maintained the right of every person not only to make up his creed out of the Bible, but also from such visions or private inspirations as he supposed himself to have been specially favoured with from heaven. In this manner religious extremes met ; the supreme pontiff claimed exemption from all authority other than his sovereign will ; and the fanatic, not less autocratical than his Holiness, repudiated all restraint other than the fluctuating afflatus that an enthusiastic temperament affiliated on the Divinity : his religion would of course be as variable as his digestion, his pulse, the changes of the seasons, or atmospheric pressure. As each independent dissenter had become a one indivisible church to himself, so had each Fifth Monarchist, Seeker, Brownist, Ranter, Jumper, Screamer, or Muggletonian become a one, divine, and indivisible pope !

Notwithstanding these divergencies the early reformers were united on many fundamental points ; they all based their faith on the Scriptures, and concurred in a Calvinistic interpretation of them, but differed as to the right of judgment, whether it ought to be vested in a collective church, individual judgment, or impulse. In some other subordinates they had arrived at conflicting interpretations. Agreed in doctrine, they divided on forms of church government, and on liturgies and ceremonies. One great sect inclined to presbytery, another to prelacy ;

while the Independent considered each chapel or congregation competent to its own management. Associated with Presbyterianism was an austere, censorious, and inquisitive morality; great plainness of dress and manners; aversion to recreative sports and all idolatrous forms of worship. In all these conclusions Independency joined; carrying them out, however, to a greater pitch of strictness and extravagance. But episcopacy was disposed to extend, though attentive to decorum and propriety, wider latitude to private conduct, attached importance to creeds and canonical habits, and affected more of the state and pomp of the Roman worship.

Complicated with religious dissensions were political ones of immense interest. Charles I. was conscientious. He had the semblance of legal right for his claims, but he was weak, perverse, and deceitful. His reign was a succession of errors and needless entanglements. The regimen of the Tudors was absurdly expected to be continued, regardless of intermediate advances in the spirit of freedom, national wealth, and intelligence. And these did not comprehend the full extent of his erroneous policy. His theological mistakes were equally flagrant with his political ones, evinced in his pertinacious efforts to recover back the tithes for the Scottish clergy, and to impose upon the people what was contrary to the popular faith to accept—the English liturgy and church government. With such a wrongheaded monarch only two courses were open; resistance, or abject submission to his wayward will and ill-timed pretensions. The collision that ensued with the Commons was productive of a rapid series of changes in religion and politics. Parties and sects completed the accustomed cycle; exhibited all the wonted aspects of revolutionary vicissitude—humble, conciliatory, and promising, while depressed; haughty

arbitrary, and disdainful, when exalted ; individually, virtuous and estimable ; collectively, venal, reckless, and abandoned. Like men inebriated, it is only under the excitement of civil convulsion that man's social nature is fully revealed ; that the strongest passions are roused, lofty and ambitious hopes kindled, high interests brought into conflict, and intrigue, rivalry, watchfulness, suspicion, and animosity, exacerbated into intense activity.

Under the urgency of imperative circumstances the Long Parliament exhibited qualities good and bad, of a standard never elicited in times of peace and regular government. In many of its acts there was a resemblance to those of the French revolutionary legislatures. The self-denying ordinance of the parliamentarians calls to mind the decree of the National Assembly, by which they disqualified themselves for two years from taking part in executive government or legislation. In both, however, the disqualification was of questionable utility, since it might deprive a nation of the services of those who, from experience and ability, are best able to render them. In rousing popular energies and calling them into efficient activity they evinced corresponding ability and resource. During the first four years after King Charles's death the government had never before been so ably and successfully carried on. Against domestic and external foes the Long Parliament were equally successful with the French convention, but, unlike the convention, they blended hypocrisy with their proceedings, singing psalms to commemorate triumphant victories.* Cant and self-seeking at length exhausted public patience, and the

* Upon news of the decisive victory of Naseby arriving in London, the city entertained both Houses at Grocers' Hall, and after dinner they sang the 46th Psalm.

people, as already remarked, beheld without regret the dispersion of this celebrated assembly.

Religious vicissitudes kept pace and correspondence with those of political parties. The fall of the king had involved the fall of the ecclesiastical establishment. Episcopacy was abolished. Presbyterianism became the predominant worship. They formed the *juste milieu* party, and affected moderation in their views; sought a more popular form of church government, and the curtailment of the regal prerogatives, but not the subversion of the general constitution of the realm. Their most active leaders were Prynne, Holles, and Annesley. Against them were arrayed the Independents, to which sect Cromwell, Selden, St. John, Vane, Whitelock, and Milton the poet belonged. These latter were of the order of destructives, and without precise limits to their aims; they were for no form of church government, but in state matters inclined to a republic. Numbers, wealth, and respectability were on the side of the Presbyterians; talent, energy, and earnestness on the side of the Independents. Moreover the army was with them, and with this formidable auxiliary they soon established their supremacy.

It was thus that the civil feud progressed; it commenced high, and spread lower and wider by every succeeding wave. The king was the first to begin the movement, and reaped its bitterest fruits. Next the Presbyterians had their trial, and were beaten by the same arts that they had practised against the sovereign, and outbid in popular favour by professions of greater zeal and disinterestedness. The triumph of the Independents was not long-lived; while it lasted they evinced the energy and resource, without the sanguinary atrocity, of the Terrorists of France: but their own servants rose

against them, and they found themselves, as Hume observes, "at once exposed to the insults of an usurper, and the hatred of the people."

Upon the ruin of these sects and parties an entire new creation sought to establish themselves. These were the Levellers and Millenarians, who affected to be of the transcendental order; infinitely wiser and better than all the politicians and sectaries that had preceded them. According to these enthusiasts no sect or party existed except themselves entitled to confidence or repute. They mistrusted the public virtue of all the higher powers, from the king and parliament downward. In religious matters they deferred to no creed or authority, save their own special revelations. They claimed equal laws and equal rights, and proposed a new constitution, in which neither king, lord, bishop, nor priest should be mentioned. The spade-husbandry denomination, formed another branch of eccentrics which the general heat and fermentation of the period originated. There was boundless scope for all social and religious phantasies. It was the carnival of conceits, holy reveries, rapt inspirations, and divine favouritisms. Excited as all men had been by the war, society had become a heated compost, out of which exhaled in endless succession and diversity every figment of morbid intellect or disordered fancy. Nothing survived to restrain, guide, or fashion people's conduct or perceptions. Both church and state had been knocked to pieces. There was no liturgy, no priesthood; rank, station, and dignity had been levelled and deprived of prescriptive influence. For the space of eleven years,—that is, from 1649 to the Restoration—a practical and almost universal toleration reigned. Every one was free to promulgate his opinions without license or dread of punishment. The *voluntary principle* was fully carried

out ; perfect free trade existed in religious disseminations without fear or favour. The pulpits of the overthrown national church were open to general competition. Some were retained by their old episcopalian incumbents, from the choice of their parishes ; many were filled by Presbyterian ministers, others by Independents, and a few by minor sectaries that swarmed in the sunshine of Commonwealth freedom. No form of service, costume, or qualification was enjoined. There was no ordination of priests, nor election of them, except on the basis of popular favour, of universal suffrage. For a time the pulpits were open to laymen esteemed to possess an edifying gift of utterance. At the commencement of the war the parliamentary regiments had regular clergymen for chaplains ; but these, after a campaign or two, sought quieter cures, and their places not being supplied, the officers themselves set up for preachers, "depending," it is said, "upon a kind of miraculous assistance of the Spirit, without any study or preparation ; and when their imaginations were heated they gave vent to the most wild and undigested absurdities."* They did not confine themselves to addresses to their own battalions, but often ascended the pulpits in towns and country places, whence they exhorted and expounded with martial vehemence. Oliver Cromwell himself did not disdain these voluntary exercises, and occasionally delivered sermons of two or three hours' duration.† The Commonwealth military

* Pictorial History of England, by Messrs. Craik and Mac Farlane ; a work crude in execution, but rich in the materials of history, derived from the original sources.

† "1649, July 16. Cromwell and his officers pray and preach in the churches and chapels about town. Cromwell was three hours in the pulpit at Whitehall, where he prayed that God would take off from his shoulders the government of this mighty people, being too heavy for him to bear."— *British History*, p. 201.

differed widely from mercenary legions; they were citizen-soldiers, yeomen, and reputable burgesses, whom the defence of great principles had embodied, and converted from the quiet pursuits of civil life into saintly heroes, who rivalled in valour and holy fervour the crusaders.

The Protector Cromwell himself, however, at length discovered an indecency or desecration in the unbounded license of preaching. In 1653 a board of triors was appointed, thirty-eight in number, composed of the leading sects, to whom unlimited power was given of examining, approving, or rejecting any person chosen or nominated to any church living. This was equivalent to dividing the church among the different religious bodies, or so liberalising and extending it as to make it comprehend them all. Cromwell held forth the measure as one of a restrictive character—as designed to restrain the previous liberty, when any one might set up as a preacher and so give himself a chance of obtaining a benefice. The board continued to exercise its functions till after Cromwell's death, and its constitution evinced something of the straightforward justice and practical sense inherent in the Protector's character. It is needless to particularise the numerous sects and parties that sprang up under the unrestricted system; most of them have some surviving representative in existing divisions and denominations.

Pending the "Reign of the Saints," as they have been termed, not many infractions can be noted of their avowed principle of universal toleration. The most disparaging example of persecution under the Protectorate was that of James Naylor, a fanatic Quaker, who fancied himself, or was thought by others, to be the Holy Ghost. Naylor was a man of an imposing presence, of a quiet, amiable, and yielding temper, who seems, unsought by himself, to have

been pushed into a perilous notoriety by the mistaken enthusiasm of his disciples. His followers were chiefly females, or husbands led away by their wives; and he was not inaptly styled a “ladies’ prophet.” They considered him the true Messiah, worshipped him in prayer, and sang hymns in his glorification. His converts multiplied, and he made a public entry into Bristol amidst hosannas and the spreading of branches, in imitation of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem. He was doubtless a visionary,— that was the extent of his aberration,— and more deluded probably by the mistaken adulation of those around him, than the infirmities of his own mind. His case demanded commiseration, instead of the cruel punishment awarded him by parliament, which thus degraded itself by sitting in judgment on so palpable a fascination.

A longer reign and more assured predominance might have made the parliamentarians as intolerant in religion as they were in politics. Against offences directed against the tenure of their own power they evinced restless severity. New governments have always bitter disappointments and enmities to grapple with, and a stringency and vigilance beyond that of ordinary times may be temporarily conceded to them; but the Commonwealth men in several cases seem to have entirely lost sight of the principles of liberty they professed and had conquered, and took some of the worst pages out of the “accursed book of despotism.” They made it treason to affirm in speech or writing that the Commonwealth was unlawful, usurped, or tyrannical; treason to deny the supremacy of parliament; treason for any, not being of the army, to stir up mutiny or insubordination therein. Obnoxious words spoken were made capital, and simple sedition was converted into high treason. The press was put into its old shackles, and extreme punishments

declared against such as printed aught against the government.

As they undervalued human science they deprived themselves of one important means of correctly appreciating human conduct. The actions of man were viewed less in their relation to the indestructible principles of his being than in their relation to some conventional assumption of a perfect and orthodox religious character. Hence certain classes of offences, which, however revolting, have this extenuation to plead, that they form part of the strongest and most defensible propensities of our nature when lawfully indulged, were legislated against by them more in the spirit of anchorites or the primitive founders of monastic institutions than of an enlightened reason. There can be no doubt that a person who wantonly and wickedly seduces a married woman would, if he could perpetrate the offence with like impunity, pick the husband's pocket; but the Puritans were not satisfied with considering adultery, as they equitably might have done, on the same level of turpitude as larceny; they made it a capital offence, aggravating it into the same monstrous degree of atrocity as murder. Instinct is outraged, and nature rebels against such barbarous edicts, and laws fall into nullity and contempt from judges and jurors, in complicity with offenders, uniting to evade them. But having thus outrageously assailed the higher description of sexual delinquency, they could not wholly overlook the next in degree; and fornication, if a first offence, was punishable by three months' imprisonment!

It is manifest the Puritans were not competent to govern men, and that their sphere of action was subordinate to that of ruling over a nation. Some further striking illustrations might be adduced from the history

of the nonconformist settlers of the American states, to which they resorted, as they told Charles II., in quest of a "quiet life in a corner of the world." But their life was not quiet; it was signally perturbed and unhappy. The first and most ample experiment of religious freedom under their rule was made in New England by Roger Williams, and is supposed to have been the foundation of the religious liberty of North America. But in Rhode Island itself the results were unsatisfactory, and a contemporary author characterises the country by the description, *bona terra, mala gens*—"the land good, but the people bad." Bigotry and persecution were nowhere more rife than among the Pilgrim Fathers—themselves fugitives from the ecclesiastical tyranny of their native land. Their chief errors and miseries resulted from an unscientific ignorance of mankind and the laws of material nature. Witchcraft was relentlessly persecuted by them; and in their superstitious terrors they trembled like children from fancied spectral sights in mists and fogs, from forestal noises, and howling winds.

CHAPTER XIII.

RESTORATION OF CHARLES II.

Precipitancy of the Restoration.—Conduct and Character of General Monk.—Trial and Treatment of the Regicides.—Restitution of Landed Property.—Ecclesiastical Conference at the Savoy Palace.—Reactions.—Act for enforcing Uniformity.—Establishment of a Standing Army.—Constitutional Securities respected.—Powers of the House of Lords.—Useful Commercial Legislation; Statutes of Frauds and of Distribution.—Corporation and Test Acts.—Settlement of the Poor.—Successes of the Dutch.—Exile of Lord Clarendon.—Treachery of the Court to the Nation.—Foreign Bribery of King and Parliament.—Popish Plots and Protestant Fears.—Revolting Conduct of the King to Queen Catherine.—Court of Libertinism; its Influence on the Community.—Extreme Profligacy of the King, his Courtiers, and Mistresses.—Results on Civilisation.—Character of Charles II.—Useful Institutions.—Men of Letters.—Costume.

THE reforms consummated by the quiet growth of public opinion in their favour, if not so effectually curative as those of violence, are usually more enduring. Although it may happen that the vices of a state are so inveterate and pertinaciously clung to, that nothing short of revolutionary force is adequate to their removal, still it is a great drawback from the reforming power derived from the physical aid of the community, that the instrument evoked — the irresistible Thor hammer, summoned into life—usually becomes as unbearable an oppression as that it has demolished. It was precisely such material intervention that perverted the course of parliamentary resistance to the crown; and the Long Parliament which, in the early stages of its progress, would have gladly compromised with the monarchy, was in the end over-

powered, as well as the king, by the military organisation it had roused into existence by its popular appeals against tyranny. Consequently the chief cause of failure in the Commonwealth was its inability to subject its own army, directed by an ambitious leader of its own appointment, to the supremacy of civil government.

The death of the Protector was, however, the death of his usurpation. No one appeared strong enough to draw his bow. Attempts were made to revive the Long Parliament, to govern by a council of officers, or to carry out the will of Oliver Cromwell by perpetuating the Protectorate in his son Richard. All failed ; and amidst the confusion that ensued, only two courses seemed open ; either to acquiesce in the sovereignty of a new chieftain of corresponding ability to Cromwell, if such could be found, or recal the Stuarts. The former, apparently, from the failure of the tentative trials of Generals Lambert, Fleetwood, and Desborough, was not forthcoming ; and the aspirations of General Monk not rising above a secondary instrumentality, the restoration of the exiled family became the sole alternative.

Although experience has proved a restoration to be mostly unsatisfactory, it afforded the easiest solution to existing perplexities, and might have proved an unmixed national benefit had it been executed with more deliberation. The Scots, in concert with Fairfax and the English Presbyterians, were the chief agencies in the return of Charles II., as they had been in the dethronement of his predecessor. Either regardless of the public liberties, or deceived by the crafty dissimulation of General Monk, or carried away by the popular eagerness for the reestablishment of the ancient government, they admitted the king to the full exercise of those dangerous prerogatives that had cost the people so arduous a struggle first to

abridge and then to abolish. It was a bequest as fatal to the Stuarts as the poisoned mantle of antiquity, and hardly less injurious to the nation.

Something, perhaps, may be offered in extenuation of Monk's conduct on this occasion. His character has mostly been blackened without the relief of any redeeming light. He had certainly the mean qualities by which mean men rise, and all generous natures abhor ; but he had virtues. He was a brave man and skilful commander, and never in his country's extremity shrunk from battle by land or sea. When, in consequence of the plague, London was deserted by the court and nobility, and all who could had left it, the Duke of Albemarle heroically stood his ground to preserve order in the city, and mitigate the evils of that frightful calamity. It must be remembered, too, that Monk was a consistent loyalist, had declined to serve against Charles I., and only began to serve the Commonwealth after the monarchy had been subverted. The heaviest imputation against him is the dissimulation by which he effected the replacement of the Stuarts. But I would ask, is it the deceit or its success that we most dislike ? Dissimulation in the accomplishment of arduous enterprises is often unavoidable. The Restoration, it is likely, could not have been effected without it ; nor, amidst the existing divisions, the needful support conciliated, or conflicting oppositions neutralised. Therefore, if Monk acted at all with a chance of success in this important crisis, he must of necessity disguise his ultimate design. Some of the most distinguished characters of history have been equally guilty of deceitful arts in the prosecution of their aims. Neither Julius Cæsar, nor Cromwell, nor Napoleon Bonaparte, unaided by them, would have succeeded in their ambitious usurpations. The deepest stain on General Monk's memory seems to

be the betrayal of the private correspondence by which the gallant Argyle was convicted ; but Burnet, who relates the infamous fact, had been guilty of a similar breach of confidence, and both ought to suffer the merited ignominy of their treachery.

Returning to the events of the Restoration. Before the arrival of Charles in England, an appeal was made to the sense of the people by a general election. The result of this ordeal was the convention parliament which met at Westminster, April 25. 1660. The elections had gone generally in favour of the Presbyterian and moderate party ; the Republicans were mostly shunned. Upon the meeting of parliament efforts were made by Sir Matthew Hale, the eminent chief justice, and by Mr. Prynne, to impose limitations on the royal power prior to the king's accession ; but they were overruled by the management of Monk, who hinted that Charles was in such pecuniary straits that it would be easy, in exchange for supplies, to obtain from him any constitutional securities. But no such securities were sought ; and vengeance, rather than stipulations in favour of civil freedom, appears to have been the first thirst of the now triumphant coalition of Presbyterians and Monarchs.

Within a week after the king's public entry into London, a proclamation was issued, at the pressing instance of parliament, for the regicides to surrender in fourteen days, on pain of exception from pardon for their lives and estates. Nineteen surrendered ; while nineteen others, not caring to trust themselves to the tender mercies of former enemies or apostate friends, kept out of the way. When the royal assent was given to the bill of indemnity there were excepted from it :—1. Fifty-one individuals actually concerned in the death of King Charles ; 2. Sir Harry Vane and General Lambert ; 3. Lord Monson

and six others, as far as regarded liberty and property ; 4. All judges in the High Court of Justice ; 5. Colonel Hutchinson, Speaker Lenthall, St. John, and sixteen others. Of the regicides, twenty-nine were already dead, nineteen had escaped, and twenty-nine were in custody. Of those in custody, the nineteen who had surrendered were to be tried for their lives, but not to be executed without a special act of parliament.

The trials were at the Old Bailey, before a court of thirty-four commissioners, some of whom, as Denzil, Holles, Monk, Annesley, Cooper (Earl of Shaftesbury), Montague, the Earl of Manchester, and Lord Say and Sele, had been the zealous colleagues of the accused in the civil war. Of the twenty-nine tried, ten were selected for execution. They met death courageously, proud of the cause for which they suffered. Of the remaining nineteen that were sentenced, but spared, their fate was as hard as imprisonment, dungeons, and beggary could make it. The clever Harry Marten lay in prison expecting death, but his life was granted on the intervention of some royalists. The Commons took no step on the side of mercy ; and those members who prided themselves on their godliness and gravity opined that Marten's wit ought not to save him ; but the Lords decided in his favour.

These victims were insufficient to appease the vindictive spirit of the reaction. Two years later Sir Harry Vane was arraigned and beheaded on Tower Hill. He was accused only of transactions subsequent to the king's execution ; and pleaded that, if complying with the existing government was a crime, all the natives had been equally criminal. He suffered with resolution ; attempting to address the people from the scaffold, he was rudely interrupted by drums and trumpets. Three more vic-

tims were obtained from Holland in Colonels Okey, Corbet, and Barkstead; they had been hunted out by Downing, who had been Cromwell's ambassador at the Hague. The States basely gave them up, and they were brought to the gibbet and knife. General Ludlow, Mr. Lisle, and other Commonwealth men, found an asylum among the congenial republicans of Switzerland, and which was held sacred by its government despite of the threats and promises, during a series of years, of the cavaliers. Failing, however, to procure the surrender of the exiles, the royalists had the baseness to resort to assassination, and Lisle was shot on the Lord's day, as he was going into a church at Lausanne.

The revengeful spirit evinced at the Restoration offers a sad proof of the surviving barbarism of the age. The wanton cruelties perpetrated in the execution of the regicides were such as might have been expected only from a tribe of cannibals. One or two examples may be given, solely with the view of illustrating the savagery of the period. The first is that of General Harrison, who had favourably impressed the captive Charles I. by his honest expression and soldier-like bearing. As he was drawn on a hurdle from Newgate to Charing Cross, on his way, his countenance being placid and cheerful, a low wretch in the crowd called after him in derision, "Where is your good old cause now?" Harrison, with a smile, clapped his hand on his heart, and said, "Here it is; and I am going to seal it with my blood!" He ascended the scaffold with an undaunted countenance, and made a forcible address to the crowd. He was cut down alive, and saw his own bowels thrown into the fire; and then he was quartered, and his palpitating heart torn out and shown to the people. Carew, Scot, Peters Coke, and the rest suffered the like pains.

On the hurdle which carried Coke was placed the ghastly head of Harrison, with the face, uncovered, turned towards him ; but Coke beheld it with unblanched countenance, and, in lieu of being horrified, seemed animated with fresh courage.* When Coke was cut down to be quartered, Peters, who was the next victim, was brought forward to see what was doing ; and the executioner, rubbing his bloody hands together, asked him, how he liked that work ?

Such brutal scenes may have been equalled, but were hardly exceeded, by the Septembrisers of the Reign of Terror, when France probably stood on a similar level of popular civilisation with England. But the spectacle of the barbarities depicted and enacted within sight of Whitehall was not limited to the populace. They were shared in by the restored family ; and the courtly crew who imagined that they gained by them, and who were inconceivably vain of a few graces they had picked up during their compulsory wanderings abroad, made it their boast that the Restoration was the dawn of civilisation to this benighted island ; but, in truth, the best parts of civilisation were darkened, and humanity and decency, which had been advancing, were made to recoil with giant strides. The revolting cruelties which had been awarded in the dark ages in cases of treason, but from which the Commonwealth had turned with disgust, were all revived ; and Charles II., whose vices by some have been varnished till they look almost like virtues, and till he appears in the light of a debonair prince, a little dissipated only, was depraved enough in taste to witness, at a short distance, the detestable atrocities. Parliament hardly evinced superior sympathies to those of “ the most religious king ” and his courtiers. Of the two Houses, the Lords, who, it

* Pict. Hist. Eng. vol. iii, p. 626.

must be owned, had been most contemptuously treated by the republicans in their triumph, were most clamorous for victims; but the Commons were hardly less sanguinary, and refused to remit, on motion made, the cutting down alive, quartering, and bowelling, even after the multitude had begun to show signs of satiety. Both Houses concurred in the senseless ignominies sought to be inflicted on the dead. It was by their joint order that the sanctuaries of the grave were violated ; and on the anniversary of the death of Charles I., the solemn recesses of Westminster Abbey were crowded by a horde of resurrectionists, the coffins of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton were put upon hurdles, dragged to Tyburn, their mouldering bodies there hung till sunset, when they were taken down and buried under the gallows. The remains of Cromwell's mother and daughter, both of whom had been exemplary in domestic virtues, were similarly treated, together with those of Admiral Blake, the bold and honest-hearted sailor; of Pym, the firm and learned champion of English liberty; of May, the historian of the Long Parliament; and of Dorislaus, who had been assassinated by the royalists.

Nearly contemporary with these transactions in England, parallel enormities were being perpetrated in Scotland, though for a different purpose. There the object was more piety than political vengeance, and the insane effort was being made for fashioning the religious sentiments of a nation by cavalry and artillery, aided by the torture of the thumbscrew, the boot, and Bass Rock imprisonments. My purpose, however, is not to deviate into historical narrative, further than to present such groupings of facts as may best characterise the period, and exhibit the existing stage of national refinement. With this view, having adverted to the treatment of the persons,

I shall next advert to that of the properties of those involved in the civil war.

Since the year 1642 a large portion of the landed property of the country had changed owners. The crown lands, those of the Church and of a few eminent royalists, had under the authority of the Commonwealth been granted away as rewards, or sold to the highest or most favoured bidder. These were now reclaimed, forcible entries were made, and, as the revolutionary purchasers were not allowed to plead a title derived from the late government, the Church, the crown, and the dispossessed royalists re-entered triumphantly on their ancient possessions.* It was a case of hardship, as many had purchased their estates at the full market value of the time. It was only to the purchasers of the crown lands that any indulgence was shown ; the rest were ejected with reckless severity, and when they alleged the equity of their contracts, it was contemptuously replied that they had taken the “risk with the benefit.”

In Ireland landed property had undergone a greater change than in England, and the reconcilement of the claims of the royalists with the possessive titles of the Cromwellian settlers formed the arduous point of arbitration. But in the dilemma decisions went much more in favour of present holders. The republicans, who held their estates by the right of the sword, were ready to defend them by the same title ; and the result was awards greatly in their favour, establishing the Protestant ascendancy on that basis of proprietary influence which even to the present constitutes its chief strength. Of the lands

* Lingard's Hist. Eng. vol. xii. p. 21. ; Hallam's Const. Hist. vol. ii. p. 420.

forfeited under the Commonwealth, nearly two-thirds were confirmed to their Protestant possessors.*

Next in importance to the recovery of the revenues of the Anglican Church was the settlement of its doctrines and government. At the outset hopes were cherished that Presbyterians and prelatists might be comprehended in the same general arrangement. These expectations were disappointed by the failure of a conference between the Bishops and Presbyterians, headed by Calamy and Baxter. It met in April, 1661, and after a four months' wrangle in the palace of the Savoy, it concluded, in the Rasselias fashion, without any conclusion; affording additional proof that controversy only widens and exasperates theological dissensions.

A more brief and decisive course was next tried. Convocation was sitting, and to them the king referred the Book of Common Prayer for additions and amendments. Within a month the amended Service Book was produced, comprising nearly 600 alterations. Most of them, however, were insignificant,—corrections of style or grammar: the more important directed that the lessons were to be read instead of sung; some collects were omitted and others substituted; private baptism in urgent cases was interdicted to midwives and restricted to the clergymen; burial rites were prohibited to suicides and the unbaptized. It is the last liturgical reform that has been carried,—the attempt of 1690 having failed,—and forms the existing basis of the ecclesiastical establishment. The alterations made rendered the national service more objectionable to the Presbyterians than before; but it was adopted by parliament, and the act for enforcing uniformity being passed, 2000 Presbyterian and Inde-

* Lingard's Hist. vol. xii. p. 75.

pendent ministers resigned their livings rather than conform to its requirements.

Four times the number of episcopalians lost their preferments under the Long Parliament for refusing the Covenant, but they were allowed nearly a fifth of the profits of their benefices. A motion in the Commons to make a similar provision on the present occasion was lost by 94 to 87. There was some difference, it must be conceded, between the claims of the ancient clergy and their modern competitors, independent of the consideration that it might have been difficult for parliament to fix the conditions of any allowance compatible with the scruples of the nonconforming divines.

A religious revolution hardly less rapid ensued in Scotland. Prelacy was established; and all meetings at presbyteries and synods prohibited, unless authorised by the bishop. The Scotch parliament also rescinded the Solemn League and Covenant, declared the command of the militia to be solely in the king, and denounced the late sale of Charles I. to the parliamentarians as most sinful and disloyal. Thus all both the English and Scotch had been struggling for during twenty-five years became null, or at least suspended for a quarter of a century longer. The change in Scotland was effected in a few months by the dexterous management of Middleton, the royal commissioner, aided by a servile, or, according to Bishop Burnet, mostly drunken parliament. The Presbyterians met and murmured in conventicles, but a new scent had been laid for popular frenzy in the persecution of popery and witchcraft. Episcopacy had also been abolished in Ireland by the Commonwealth, but it was now restored in the same manner as in England and Scotland.

The origin of a standing army may be dated from the Restoration, prior to which there had been no perma-

nently embodied military force. On the return of Charles the revolutionary army in the three kingdoms amounted to more than 60,000, and was a source of constant anxiety to the government. By a cautious procedure, a careful attention to the wants and feelings of the men, by flattering them for loyalty and discipline, by gratuities, and the liquidation of their arrears, regiment after regiment was successively disbanded without exciting mutiny or any public expression of dissatisfaction. The absence of a similar dexterous policy, as before remarked, formed the cardinal error of the Commonwealth, and opened the way for the usurpation of Cromwell.

Charles and his ministers had no intention of governing without a defensive force, only they sought to embody one on which they could more safely rely than the soldiers of the republic. For this purpose the Guards were established, formed partly out of the most reliable troops of Oliver and partly from the creation of new regiments. To General Monk's regiment were added two more, forming the Coldstream Foot Guards. In 1661 the Life Guards were raised, composed and treated like the *Gardes du Corps* of the French king, being principally gentlemen of fortune, who themselves or fathers had fought in the civil war. To these were added the Blues, the Old Buffs, the Queen's, the Scotch Fusileers, and the King's Own. Altogether a force of 5000 men was organised, and which, in the next reign, was augmented to 30,000. Parliament, however, never sanctioned the enrolment of this large standing army, nor did it vote the money required for its maintenance. They were embodied by the crown only, and were paid for either out of the Civil List or by diverting the supplies granted for other purposes. Both Charles and James II. relied strongly on this unconstitutional force for the establishment of their arbitrary

scheme of government, but which James lived to find, as the Bourbons did at a later period, a broken reed.

Despite of the despotic tendencies of the government, the spirit which animated Hampden and Pym, under Charles I., was not wholly extinct under their successors, and some respect was continued to be shown to the great constitutional principles to which these eminent patriots gave utterance. Royal proclamations setting aside the law, which almost proved the ordinary mode of government, were hardly known after the Restoration, and an attempt to levy money without consent of parliament had entirely ceased. The courts of High Commission and Star Chamber were not sought to be revived, and the oppressive feudal privileges of wardship and purveyance were entirely abolished. The *Habeas Corpus Act* passed under Charles II., by affording more definite guarantees against arbitrary imprisonment, both as to time and place, was a valuable addition to personal security. Some important constitutional decisions were arrived at on parliamentary rights: as that the House of Lords has only an appellate, not an original jurisdiction in civil suits; that it has no power to originate a money-bill, or to frame or alter any clause imposing a burden on the people; and that an impeachment before it by the Commons is not abated by a dissolution of parliament. The Lords, however, succeeded in establishing some immunities, either new or not before so fully possessed. They now acquired the privilege of first recording their dissent in the journals of the House, and afterwards of inserting their protest comprising the grounds of it. Instances of the former, Mr. Hallam states, had occurred from the Reformation, but the latter practice was hardly known during the reign of the first Charles.

Some of the minor laws of the period are not unworthy

of brief notice, and evince intelligence and continued attention to the commercial and social utilities before remarked in legislation. Hardly any legal enactment has been more serviceable in trade and personal transactions than the Statute of Frauds, which requires written in place of verbal or oral agreements, and that in sales above the value of ten pounds there shall be some written memorandum of the bargain, or earnest given of the contract. In cases of persons dying without a will, the Statute of Distribution made a useful testamentary settlement, by fixing the proportional rights of the widow and children in the personal estate. A salutary preventive of frivolous litigation, too, was the act which provides that in all personal actions where the damages do not exceed forty shillings, the plaintiff shall recover no more costs than damages.

Against this favourable aspect of legislation a darker side may be presented from new laws which augmented the authority of the crown, or abridged the rights of the people. Of this description were the Corporation and Test Acts, and those against seditious conventicles and tumultuous petitioning. Restrictions on the freedom of printing and publishing were not peculiar to the later Stuarts. The Long Parliament, by repeated ordinances against unlicensed printing, hindered, as far as they could, the great instrument of the press from serving the purposes of their adversaries; and their one-sidedness drew forth the noble apology of Milton for the freedom of printing, but it had little influence on those to whom it was addressed.

The celebrated act for the settlement of the poor, which was passed two years after the Restoration, pertains more to domestic than political legislation, and was an attempted improvement in the management of paupers. The

objects of the statute were twofold,—first, the restraint of vagrant thieving ; and secondly, to fix each parish with the maintenance of its own poor only, without being burdened with the poor of other parishes. Both objects were laudable, but the expedients by which they were sought to be practically compassed were productive of considerable evils. First, it rendered parishes antagonistic in lieu of cooperative for a common benefit, and this became a fruitful source of expensive litigation. It had the further drawback of infringing the personal freedom of locomotion in the poor, consequently of the free circulation of industry ; and vested a very arbitrary power in justices, two of whom might forcibly remove any new comer into a parish, if likely to become chargeable to it.

Turning from legislation to the domestic and political bearings of the present reign, some of them may be considered misfortunes, but the great majority were the direct results of flagitious misgovernment. The great plague of 1665 was in 1666 followed by the no less frightful conflagration of the metropolis ; and in the next summer the English fleets were compelled to retire before the Dutch, who advanced triumphantly up the Thames and Medway, burning and destroying the shipping and fortifications of Sheerness. If De Ruyter had made direct for London, as was strongly apprehended, he might have destroyed all the shipping in the Thames ; but while he was in the Medway, Prince Rupert threw up strong batteries, and sunk a number of vessels to block up the passage. Immediately after this insulting defiance peace was concluded with the Dutch, on terms so dis honourable as to excite general dissatisfaction and strong suspicions against the court. Public discontent was aggravated by the fact that parliament had voted large supplies for the vigorous prosecution of the war.

In the same year of mortifications the great seal was taken from Lord Clarendon, chiefly at the instance of a conspiracy headed by Lady Castlemaine, the king's mistress. But the conduct of the chancellor had made him generally unpopular: with the king for opposing his licentiousness; with the nonconformists for opposing liberty of conscience; and with the friends of liberty for his arbitrary maxims of civil government. The dissolute court hated him for his careful observance of decorum and the outward appearances of religion; and many members of both Houses, who might have approved of a great part of his conduct and excused the rest, were enraged at his arrogant demeanour. He was impeached of high treason, on the ground of common fame, without the examination of witnesses, by the Commons; upon which the Lords resolved that he could not be committed in the absence of any specific charge of treason. The articles of impeachment, which were seventeen in number, might have been drawn closer, had several transactions of Clarendon been more fully known as subsequently revealed. There is good reason for believing that he was the principal adviser of a standing army to be raised and maintained by a forced contribution, and of the corrupt sale of Dunkirk to the French king. In his secret correspondence with the French court, he betrayed state matters which it was the interest of the country should be concealed; and was not only himself a traitor, but made the king a similar delinquent by soliciting money from the king of France, to minister to the licentious profusion of his own sovereign. Clarendon was thus guilty of the enormous iniquity of rendering a lavish prince dependent on the wages of a foreign power, to enable him to elude the control of parliament. Avarice was his flagrant vice; and it was observed by Evelyn, who was

friendly towards the chancellor, that he “never would nor did do anything but for money.” He had too the weakness of ostentation; built a large house—“Dunkirk House” it was called from its surmised origin—of unparalleled magnificence, storing it with choice pictures and furniture that excited the surprise of all who remembered his recent poverty. Parliament felt so strongly hostile to him, that Charles declared his inability to protect him, and advised his withdrawal from the kingdom. This advice he adopted, and on a dark November night escaped to France. He was old and infirm, vastly proud withal, and after bearing his misfortunes with little dignity, died in exile seven years after.

After the retirement of Lord Clarendon a succession of ministers, more corrupt than himself, directed the councils of the king. In 1670 he threw himself into the hands of five unprincipled men, collectively denominated the Cabal from the initials of their names, and who supported him in every attempt to make himself independent of parliament. One meritorious act the Cabal did in forming the triple league of England, Holland, and Sweden, to check the ambitious designs of France against the Dutch republic. But while ministers were negotiating this politic alliance, Charles was driving a private bargain with the French court by which Louis XIV. was to aid him with money to make himself absolute. All the worst acts of Charles originated in his pecuniary necessities; to meet which he resorted to the most scandalous expedients, as the sale of Dunkirk to the French, the piratical but unsuccessful attack on the Smyrna fleet of the Hollanders, and the shutting up of the Exchequer, which was a virtual national bankruptcy. In 1670 the king had become the regular pensioner of France, at the rate of 200,000*l.* a year, payable quarterly. For this

annuity it was stipulated by secret treaty that Charles should assist the French king in his projects against the States, and that on the first favourable opportunity he should effect a compulsory change, with the assistance of 6000 French infantry, in the national religion. It was impossible for any treachery to be more flagitious to the nation or to the duties of the regal office. But all were corrupt, — the king, his ministers, and parliament. All were base enough to take foreign bribes. A regular practice of paying the members for their votes was introduced first by Clifford, and afterwards more systematically, from 1673 to 1678, during the mean and dissembling administration of the Earl of Danby.

The parliament that met May 3. 1661, the first after the dissolution of the convention parliament, has earned deserved ignominy by the name of the Pension Parliament. It sat longer than the famous Long Parliament, and was not dissolved till January 24. 1678. The elections had for the second time deprived the Presbyterians of their ascendancy ; they lost the lead acquired at the outset of the Commonwealth by the rise of the Independent or republican party ; at present they were overpowered by the restored ascendancy of the Church and Aristocracy. Not above fifty or sixty of the new members were of the Presbyterian connexion ; the rest were royalist and cavalier, or the sons of cavaliers returned under the influence of the great families, the old gentry lately swelled by a large increase of the baronetage, and the episcopal clergy. The parliament so elected and Charles had worked so well together for seventeen years that Shaftesbury called it “the king’s wife, and the dissolution a divorce.” If liberal supplies were voted, a liberal price was paid by the court to the party leaders whose influence had obtained them. But after Charles

had become a pensioner of France, this rendered him less dependent on his faithful Commons, and begat jealousy between the parties; aggravated by the overt manifestations of the king's designs to restore popery and slavery in redemption of his engagements with Louis XIV., the great European missionary of these institutes. Base as the Commons were, their Protestantism was not on sale with them as with the king, and by their occasional opposition they kept in awe the throne, and did not suffer the flame of liberty wholly to expire among the people. French money was lavishly distributed among the members, as well as the bribes of Clifford and Danby; and, what is extraordinary, some of those deemed patriots by excellence were not ashamed to soil their hands with the gold of Louis. "When," says Dalrymple, "I found in the French dispatches Lord Russell intriguing with the court of Versailles, and Algernon Sidney taking money from it, I felt very near the same as if I had seen a son turn his back in the day of battle." Various explanations have been offered to account for such obliquities of conduct. One is that the aim of the patriots in their French connexion was to detach Louis from Charles, and obtain his aid in bringing about the reduction of the standing army, the existence of which occasionally excited the jealousy and alarm of the French king. In secret and disreputable transactions, which can only be conducted by knaves, all kinds of knavery may be expected. Upon this theory Mr. Hallam has suggested that the names entered in the list of the French ambassador were not the recipients of his bribes, but that Barillon, who was wasteful in his habits, had entered them in his account of payments, but applied the money to his own uses.

The elections for the new parliament of 1679 were conducted with unusual heat and animosity. The court

neglected no possible bribery or exertion ; but the country party were equally active, and by making an extravagant use of the popish plot they had the advantage of their opponents. It was the age of plots, of lies, and false pretences ; and the contrivers of the first plot being richly rewarded, others were rapidly manufactured. Popery was then, as long subsequently, though with far greater reason, the panic fear of the nation. The public abandonment of Protestantism by the Duke of York naturally alarmed the community, and originated the great intrigue of altering the succession, by substituting, in place of the king's brother, the presumptive heir to the crown, the king's natural son, the Duke of Monmouth.* The discovery of a pretended plot to kill the king and establish popery kept up the popular excitement. Notwithstanding the infamous character of Titus Oates and Bedloe, and the improbable nature of their disclosures, they obtained general belief both in and out of parliament. The Duke of York withdrew to Brussels, and many noblemen and others became the innocent victims of the national delusion. The Commons, however, failed to carry the bill for the duke's exclusion, chiefly from the resistance of the Lords. By their violence the Whigs frustrated their purpose ; many became apprehensive of a renewal of the civil war ; and the king, dexterously

* Doubts have been started whether Monmouth was the son of Charles. (*Mems. Stuarts*, vol. iv. p. 316.) He acquiesced in his paternity, but he good-naturedly did that in respect of some other of his questionable ducal issue. It was the boast of Colonel Robert Sidney that Lucy Walters was "already sped" before she deserted him for the king. According to James II., the real parentage was so uncertain, that when Monmouth "grew to be a man, he very much resembled the colonel, both in stature and countenance, even to a wart on his face." But the fathership of the illicit is not unnaturally open to suspicion.

availing himself of a sudden reaction in public feeling, dissolved at Oxford the last parliament he ever assembled. Tory addresses were obtained, by the aid of the clergy and gentry, from all parts of the kingdom, and high monarchical principles again came in vogue. A dangerous blow was levelled at public liberty by new modelling municipal corporations, which enabled the court not only to pack juries for judicial convictions, but to influence the return of parliamentary representatives. An unsuccessful attempt by Lord Russell, Algernon Sidney, and other determined but imprudent leaders, only accelerated this advance to arbitrary government. After the alarm and indignation produced by the discovery of the Rye House Plot Charles was as absolute as any sovereign in Europe. All complaints were suppressed, and the whole kingdom subdued, not even excepting the city of London, which had always opposed despotic power. All that was requisite to complete the old fabric of Tudor despotism, was the re-establishment of the courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, with a shorter way to the pockets of the people than through the votes of their representatives. These might have been obtained, had not the king's sudden death by apoplexy, subjecting the machinations of tyranny to a less skilful direction, arrested the march of popery and absolutism.

After this retrospective summary of the leading characteristic events of the present reign, it is manifest that little can be gleaned in conclusion which can be properly ranked among the active agencies of national advancement. The entire foundation indeed of the Restoration was not progression but reaction; either from failures in republican experiments, and disappointments at the inconsistencies of conduct in their initiative instrumentality, or the revival of traditional prepossessions in favour of

the feudal monarchy, the crown would appear to have been restored to its former possessors less for reform than re-establishment in its ancient immunities. Despite of this prostration to former idols, a constitutional spirit of watchfulness had been awakened by the late struggles which was never wholly extinguished. Charles II., reckless and unprincipled as he was, lived and reigned under a constant apprehension of the omnipotence of parliamentary power, which he must submit to, or conciliate in extreme emergencies, unless he chose to incur the risk of being again sent on his travels, or to the block like his father. Upon two great questions he appears to have been fully aware the mind of the nation was irrevocably fixed: first, in the maintenance of the reformed religion; and, secondly, in never again submitting to be taxed without the consent of its representatives in parliament.

These were important realisations in favour of responsible government. The vital issue between Charles and the parliament was the amount of the annual supplies; and that they should be ample enough to defray the expense of the maintenance of his standing army and sensual indulgences, formed the graduating scale that fixed the price of its mercenary votes and the purchase money of its factious leaders. Apart from its political corruption, the legislature of the period, as already shown, was of a protective and useful character, directed to the better security of personal liberty from regal and judicial caprice, and the conveniences of trade, industry, and social life.

All the underground machinery of society continued uninterruptedly its onward movement. The material prosperity of the country was independent of the government, and had never reached a higher pitch. The truth is, that the germs of commercial and industrial activity had taken such firm root under the Tudors, especially under

the wise, economical, and vigorous rule of Elizabeth, that neither change of dynasty, the civil war itself, nor the profligate administration of the present reign could stifle their growth and development.

The conclusion and representation of the bearings of this reign on Civilisation would be incomplete without some descriptive strictures on the Court and character of Charles II. One painful observation irresistibly forces preliminary utterance before approaching these topics. Is it not lamentable to reflect on the sad and degrading alternative to which England was reduced on the death of that extraordinary man, Oliver Cromwell? After the noble stand made by the Long Parliament against King Charles, and after the heroic examples of courage and self-denial displayed in the actual conflicts of the civil war, is it not grievous to think on the close of the Protectorate, from the prevalence of weak and factious divisions, the wretched incompetence of the leading public characters, and most of all, perhaps, the ignorant impatience of the people, that the selfish and irresponsible scheme of Monk should prevail, and no escape be left to an embarrassed community save the Restoration? Would not any chance company of strolling players have been as worthy and competent to govern the realm as Prince Charles and the dissolute troop of both sexes that accompanied or followed him from the continent? It is due, however, to the king to admit that as chief or manager of this abandoned flight of immigrants, he was undoubtedly, as he ought to have been, the cleverest among them, if not the most respectable in conduct.

Mr. Jesse, in his interesting *mélange* of truth and gossip, informs us that the king, five years before his return, had numbered the seventeenth in succession on his file of continental mistresses*; and this upon his

* *Memoirs of the Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 289.

slender allowance of 600 pistoles a month from the French king; unaided too, as we learn from the same authority, by the convenience of a coach to assist him in his transits from one fair idol to another. His limited pecuniary means had induced him during his exile to seek an advantageous matrimonial alliance. He first sought, through the medium of Lord Broghill, the hand of Cromwell's youngest daughter Frances, but the Protector promptly declined the honour, on the ground of Charles's extreme dissoluteness. His next offer met a similar refusal from Cardinal Mazarine, for his niece Hortensia, the most beautiful woman and the richest heiress in France.* His tender for the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine, with a large fortune, was not more favourably received. He is known to have sought other alliances, but the history of them is too obscure for notice. He failed in the essential requisite of a character to render him desirable as a son-in-law, and of which the dissipated life he notoriously led, in dancing, gaming, and habitually frequenting the fairs of Cologne and Frankfort in search of adventures, had deprived him.

Charles, however, was the elect of England for a king, if not for a husband; and his connubial prospects brightened rapidly with his fortunes. Abandoned and even

* This lady (the Duchess of Mazarine, as she became, after her marriage to the Duke de Meillraye) entered the seraglio of Charles, and became his mistress. She was a strange creature. "Wild, reckless, and without principle, she threw away her brilliant fortunes on a whim. Hazardous adventures and indelicate fooleries were preferred to fair fame and substantial grandeur. With all her wit she became the scorn of fools; and finally, with wealth that had once appeared boundless, died impoverished and in exile, bequeathing nothing but a melancholy moral and a disgraceful name."—*Memoirs of the Stuarts*, vol. iv. p. 115.

contemptible as his continental life had been, immediately after the Restoration, nearly all the courts of Europe strove for the honour of giving him a wife. His wants being pressing from outstanding claims, in the first year of his government he held himself at auction, and Portugal became the highest bidder, offering, with the Princess Catherine, Tangiers, Bombay, the profits of free trade, and half a million sterling. The orthodox Clarendon decided Charles in his preference ; though many feared that the king, already suspected of popery, would be still more mistrusted with a Catholic wife and a mass-chapel in his own house.* After some delays that were irksome to the king, not because he longed for the royal bride, but because he was greatly in need of her dower, the Infanta arrived, and was married and installed at Hampton Court. At this time the reigning favourite was Lady Castlemaine, the wife of Roger Palmer, Esq., who had graduated for a diplomatic appointment and Irish peerage. Charles being a married man, it was naturally expected he would break the connexion with his mistress, or at least manage his intercourse with her as privately as possible. But he would make no sacrifice either to duty or decency, and was heartless enough to present his mistress to Catherine, and insist that she

* Selfish motives have been ascribed to Clarendon's advice, and it was positively believed that he purposely preferred a queen whom he knew beforehand would, from natural causes, be childless, in order that his own grandchildren (by Anne Hyde and the king's brother James) might succeed to the throne. His grave offences at this period were comprised in a couplet, sung in London streets, and chalked upon the walls :—

“ Three sights to be seen,—

 Dunkirk, Tangiers, and a barren queen.”

Pict. Hist. vol. iii. p. 704.

should be one of the queen's ladies of the bedchamber. Flesh and blood could not endure this; the young queen was overwhelmed with grief at such revolting proximity, but the king would bear no denial, nor listen to any reason. It is the most revolting incident of his history, and can only be paralleled in cruelty by the brutal tyrannies of the Eighth Henry. Clarendon at first remonstrated against this scandalous arrangement, but finding the king obdurate, was mean enough to concur; and the model lord chancellor did not disdain to pander to royal profligacy by exerting his efforts to overcome the queen's virtuous scruples.*

The Lady Castlemaine, or Duchess of Cleveland as she became on retirement, has historical interest enough, if not from personal worth, from influence, to claim further notice. On her account the memory of a celebrated historian and that of not the least popular of English sovereigns have been transmitted with deserved ignominy. Barbara Villiers, the reigning sultana of ten years, was the orphan daughter of a noble courtier, and as supreme in licentiousness as her royal master. A great beauty

* The unbending self-will and utter want of feeling in the king appear from the subjoined extract from his letter to the chancellor:—"I forgot, when you were here last night, to desire you to give Broderick good council not to meddle any more in what concerns Lady Castlemaine, and to let him have a care how he is the author of any scandalous reports, for if I find him guilty of any such thing I will make him repent it to the last moment of his life. And now I am entered on this matter, I think it very necessary to give you a little good council, lest you may think that by making a farther stir in the business you may divert me from my resolution, which all the world shall never do, and I wish I may be unhappy in this world, and in the world to come, if I fail in the least degree of what I resolved, which is, of making my Lady Castlemaine of my wife's bedchamber." — *Mems. of Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 402.

she appears to have been, both from voluptuous and unusual size of person, and faultless charms of feature and expression. In this estimate both Burnet and Pepys, the Admiralty secretary, concur; but, says the bishop, she "was enormously vicious and ravenous; foolish, but imperious; very uneasy to the king;" so "that often he was not master of himself, or capable of minding business." The amorous monarch, however, had other sources of distraction. He had been captivated by Mary Davis, who danced a jig marvellously, and Nelly Gwynn, another public debutante, both of whom he introduced at court. For these inconstancies Castlemaine retaliated with interest; and as the king had two actresses, she took two actors and a rope-dancer, with whose professional agility and symmetry of shape she had become enamoured. She also gambled extravagantly. "I was told," says Pepys, "that my Lady Castlemaine is so great a gamester as to have won 15,000*l.* in one night, and lost 25,000*l.* in another at play, and both played 1000*l.* and 1500*l.* at a cast." The lavish allowances of the king, some 30,000*l.* or 50,000*l.* a year, would enable "the lady," as she was termed, to squander at this rate; and she had beside the disposal of the principal gifts of the crown in church and state.*

* The gaieties of the court are thus described by Evelyn, as he saw them shortly before the death of Charles:—"I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and as it were total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening), which this day se'nnight I was witness of, the king sitting and toying with his concubines,—Portsmouth, Cleveland, Mazarine, &c.,—a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least 2000*l.* in gold before them."

Here follows Pepys' account of a court entertainment:—"The

Retaliation seems to have been the established *lex non scripta* in the gallantries of Whitehall, and the system of reprisal was continued in the more genial atmosphere of Oxford, to which the court retired during the plague in London. The ancient mythology appears to have been approximated to in the *dramatis personæ* as well as in the studies of this famous seat of learning. Debauchery increased, and Oxford became the scene of scandalous intrigues, gaming, and drinking. The Duke of York was as great a sensualist as his elder brother, but more stolid, and without the gay humours and worldly sense of the king. He was, however, a similar transgressor; and his duchess (Anne Hyde, Clarendon's daughter), according to Pepys, took her revenge in kind, by falling in love with one of the grooms of the duke's bedchamber, and Harry Sidney, her handsome master of the horse, younger brother of the republican Algernon Sidney. In these loose amours the libertine brothers were not unfrequently rivals, and, like the two kings of Brentford, sought the fragrance of the same bouquet. It was so with "La Belle Stewart," the king and the duke joining in pursuit of

room where the ball was to be was crammed with fine ladies, the greatest of the court. By and by comes the king and queen, the duke and duchess, and all the great ones; and after seating themselves the king takes out the Duchess of York, and the duke the Duchess of Buckingham; the Duke of Monmouth my Lady Castlemaine, and so other lords and other ladies, and they danced the brantle. After that the king led a lady a single couranto; and then the rest of the lords one after another other ladies: very noble it was, and great pleasure to see. Then to country dances; the king leading the first, which he called for, which was, 'Cuckolds all away,' the old dance of England. . . . The manner was, when the king dances, all the ladies in the room, and the queen herself, stand; and indeed he dances rarely, and much better than the Duke of York." — *Mems. of the Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 333.

this passionless coquette, and were madly jealous of each other: both appear to have been foiled by the peerless but inanimate beauty, who, though witless, had cunning enough to prefer a safe match with the Duke of Richmond to a splendid intrigue with royalty.

The shameless outrages of the Court of Strumpetocracy on public decency, if not their innate depravity, seem to have roused the moral sensibilities of the solemn Clarendon. "It was a time," says he, "when all license in discourse and actions was spread over the kingdom, to the heart-breaking of many good men, who had terrible apprehension of the consequences of it." Under the shadow of this grave forecast one might take leave of a revolting interlude in British history, but the rebuke directed by the venerable Tory at the English Messalina is worthy of ancient virtue, and ought not to pass unnoticed.

Lord Clarendon was the avowed enemy of the Duchess of Cleveland. He forbade his wife to visit her, and allowed no instrument to pass the great seal in which her name was mentioned. Afterwards, when he had been deprived of his office, and was retiring from the king's presence a disgraced man, the duchess, being told he was approaching, hastened to her window at Whitehall to jeer him. "Madam," was his only reply, "if you live *you will grow old*,"*—a bitter monition, and not an inapt counterpart to that which Marius addressed to the proud senate of Rome, when he apprised it that he was seated on the ruins of Carthage. The application was doubtless lost on the fleeting flower of the day. But Barbara Villiers did live to be old, and became the unhappy partner of Beau Fielding, the Orlando the Fair of "The Tatler," Nos. 50. and 51.

* Memoirs of the Stuarts, vol. iv. p. 94.

It might, perhaps, have formed a happy sequel to the licentious revelries of Whitehall had the memory of them perished in the same conflagration that reduced to ashes the vast palatial pile which once covered the wide area stretching from the Thames over the present site of the Horse Guards and the Admiralty. In this spacious conglomeration, the king, his queen, his brother, Prince Rupert, the Duke of Monmouth, and the cousin of Charles, with all the great officers and entire courtly train, had their lodgings, and all the royal family their suite of apartments and culinary and other offices. The prurient bed, however, though mephitic, bore fruit, which may have contributed to diversify, if not soften, the graver tints of our composite civilisation. Puritanism had gone to an extreme in austerities, and the over-bent bow recoiled with corresponding force after the pressure had been removed ; and though the shocking abominations which entered with the Restoration cannot be too severely reprehended, its wild gaiety may have not been without some compensating alleviation in cooperating with the unusual material prosperity of the country, to lighten up the heart of the nation from the spectral gloom and despondency to which it had sunk under the stern but not infallible rule of the Commonwealth.

However this may be, the Court of Libertinism, joyous and reckless in debauchery as it appears to have been, did not escape, after its delirious intoxication was past, the unfailing retribution of gross vice and immorality. If in its promiscuous amours it indulged the license of the vagrant tribes, or verged on a state of nature, it fully experienced the insecurities and miseries of such anti-social conditions of existence. Jealousy, envy, anguish of heart, remorse, beggary, revengeful duels, were some of the bitter fruits reaped by the votaries of a

voluptuous career. From one or other of these redeeming mulcts probably neither gallant nor dazzling belle was wholly exempt. Indeed, it would seem from their histories that some of the most notable of the merry debauchees, who shone in the saloons and labyrinthine galleries of the palace made penitential atonement for their lawless lives. The royal sinner and grand master of the harem became contrite and Catholic ; Buckingham was humbled, Rochester and Count de Grammont became neophytes ; Dorset, Sir Charles Sedley, Etherege, and the Killigrews were reclaimed wits, who lived to be sedate. The frail beauties who had become renegades to their order, and bartered away lasting powers for fleeting show, were also repentants,—Magdalens mostly that had loved much and sinned much, and, it may be hoped were forgiven.

A more serious inquiry is the influence of the court's abandoned example on society. Was it contaminated by it ? I am rather inclined to a negative conclusion. The licentiousness of the courtiers was too outrageous to corrupt or excite to imitation. Consequently there could be no fusion or community of feeling and conduct between the people and the palace. Whitehall, therefore, it is probable, like the Ghetto of the Jews in some continental cities, or Wapping or St. Giles's at a later period, would be a proscribed purlieu, into which few rational or decent persons would transgress, or seek from it model or precept. Charles would not be looked up to as the glass of fashion. If he was at the head of society, as it has been alleged, it was only of that caste of society which in our time has descended to the cafés and restaurateuries of the Haymarket, the vicinity of Leicester Square, or the slips of the theatres.

The regimen of the English court was ostensibly adopted from that of France ; but, as is the wont of

imitations, the copy fell below the original. There might be some approach to unity of purpose between the two courts in seeking to reconcile the extreme of sensual license with the extreme of devotion. But here the resemblance ceased. At Versailles elegance, refined taste, and classic models were emulated, but at Whitehall only what was low in manners, in poetry, or the arts met with favour. From such debased presentments, not only did the remains of the Puritan party shrink with abhorrence, but the general public was disgusted with the wantons and gallants that flourished in Charles's unbridled precinct. Even the old nobility kept aloof; they regretted, Mr. Jesse says, "the stately and sober amusements of his father's court." The returned exiles of both sexes were, in truth, the chief source of disorder; formed the most conspicuous examples of depravity, and who had, in common with the king, begun abroad their career of dissipation. Although mostly servile and corrupt, the parliament was not wholly unmindful of the imported pollution; it had the Protestant virtue of voting the exclusion from the throne of the ducal sensualist James, and in 1675 it voted that the "debauchery and impiety of the age" were among the grievances to be redressed; alluding, doubtless, to court licentiousness. The resignations for conscience sake by 2000 clergymen, in one day of their cures, afford additional proof that purity and honesty were not extinct in the nation, and that the lax principles of Whitehall were remote from those of general society. Altogether, then, I am constrained to arrive at the first intimation, that this dissipated reign did not seriously deteriorate public morals; while its gaiety may have breathed a spirit of rational enjoyment in the saturnine, and allayed the causeless anxieties of the over-sanctimonious.

There only wanted a better moral adjustment in the head master of the revels, and the nation might have been happy in its chief magistrate. The king had fine parts and intellectual aptitude, but they were not powerful enough to subordinate his more developed sensuous nature. Had the relation been reversed, his natural gifts and dispositions were sufficient to have rendered him a model of social life, and a proud ornament of the throne. But all was lost that could do him honour, either as a man or a sovereign, by his total lapse into the Circcean cup of impurity.

Contemporaries were impressed with the superior mental qualities of Charles, but some of them partook too much of his weaknesses to be considered wholly impartial judges. De Grammont said he "showed great abilities in great affairs, but was incapable of application to any that were not so." The saying of Lord Rochester, "that he never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one," is a nice discrimination, and partly corroborated by the Duke of Buckingham, who said that "Charles could have been a great king if he would, and that James would if he could." His manners were gracious, the first gentleman in England, Bishop Burnet, admits—

"The easiest prince and best bred man alive!"

The good-humour of the king, his wit and conversational powers, have been often celebrated. It was from society, not books, that he drew information. Whether drunk or sober he was free to everyone, and never lost an opportunity of conversing with distinguished foreigners. He gave Dryden a hint for a poem, and told him that he was "himself poor enough to be a poet;" and it may be added, probably from like causes. In mechanics, chemistry, ship-building, architecture, anatomy, and angling,

he felt considerable interest. The politer sciences had few seductions; in these his preferences, like his habits, were impure. "The restoration of royalty," according to Lord Orford, "brought back the arts, not taste." Indelicacy and licentiousness were the court rage, and the great poet just named was not an exception. Dryden contributed his portion of bombast and heroic obscenity, and lavished the courtly dew of his adulations "on titled rhymers and inglorious kings." Of another tuneful spendthrift it is said, "If Wycherly had nature, it was nature stark naked. The painters veiled it but little more. Sir Peter Lely scarce saves appearances but by a bit of fringe or embroidery. His nymphs, generally reposed on the turf, are too wanton and too magnificent to be taken for anything but maids [shams] of honour. Yet fantastic as his compositions seem, they were pretty much in the dress of the times, as is evident by a Puritan tract published in 1698, entitled 'Just Reprehensions of Naked Shoulders.'" It was less a show of the fine arts than of the saloons, or rather as the saloons of the existing theatres used to be. But the above is Horace Walpole's connoisseurship. Mr. Jesse on the same canvass luxuriates in wilder fancies:—

"There is a charm in Lely's celebrated Gallery of the Beauties of the Court of Charles, which none but a very cold or sanctimonious person could fail to appreciate. There is in the bright aspect of beauty—in the eye that still languishes, and the smile that still warms—a fascination and a reality, which identifies us almost involuntarily with the merry court of Charles, and which recalls vividly the song, the laughter, and the sparkling wit, with all the blandishments and allurements of that Paphian court. Standing in that circle of beauty, the imagination easily recalls the studio of Lely, and pictures to itself what it once was, the lounging place of the young, the gay, and the beautiful. We can fancy one of the fair forms around us seated before the obsequious painter, ex-

hibiting, it may be, all the absurd yet graceful prettiness of spoiled beauty and petted caprice. We can fancy the swarthy features of the merry monarch, bending over the chair of his mistress, whispering his soft nothings and provoking the gay repartee ; while around are grouped the idle courtiers, favoured, according to their merits, by the guardianship of the muff, the lap-dog, or the fan. The very languish that still captivates on the canvass may have been the actual expression of the minute, thrown out in a moment of tenderness, to snare the cosy heart of Charles, and caught in a happy moment of inspiration by the admiring artist."—*Memoirs of the Stuarts*, vol. iv. p. 211.

It is impossible to endorse all this. It is a fair-looking but deceptive bill. Indolence and vice, frivolity and disgust, are tinted off in rainbow hues. Walpole's sketch is more true of the fallen angels of Hampton Court. The principal figure especially requires darker shades. Charles, despite of his fine gifts, was veritably a Count Fathom of iniquity ; essentially a low man,—low in tastes, in habits, sympathies, and preferences. His affable manners, and I may add his easy good nature, was only indifference to the object ; if thwarted, none was more obdurate and imperiously cruel. He espoused the Infanta of Portugal, a discreet princess, solely for her large dower, and then savagely coerced the friendless stranger into revolting companionship with a strumpet. He was callous to all appeals save those of dissolute women. Although he believed the Popish plot to be a gross imposture, he never interfered in behalf of any of its victims, not even to save the aged and innocent Lord Stafford. He was strongly solicited in favour of the spirited and clever Sir Harry Vane, but he let him suffer, though his death was the most questionable act of justice perpetrated against the regicides.

Beside hardheartedness, Charles had another failing, which entirely compromises all true chivalry and all true

honour in kings, or, indeed, in anybody else. He was void of truth, his word was worthless in private engagements; and his religion, a gross cheat on the nation from the beginning to the end of his reign. He was a Robert Macaire on a throne, could dance and fence well, and was a graceful equestrian, but he never exemplified any virtue that imposed the smallest self-denial on his degrading appetites. His personal merits were of the melodramatic cast; in this spirit he patronised the crafty ruffian Blood, sought his acquaintance, pensioned him, and domiciled him in the palace. His other associates were hardly more worthy; slender wits the best of them, Dryden excepted; gamesters, drunkards, and street-brawlers, some of them manslaughterers or poisoners, all grossly dissolute, and the sole occupation of whose depraved existence was heartless seductions and loathsome adultery. The language in use was in keeping. It was grossly offensive, and would now be held abhorrent even on the London *pavé*. Swearing was habitual, and an oath from Gwynn or other courtezan never failed to elicit a hearty laugh from the “merry monarch.”

In the astrology of life, the common aptitude is to cast the horoscope of others from our own. Politics, religion, morals, have mostly this objective view. It was an error of the king; he viewed mankind in relation to himself only. A confirmed voluptuary, he valued appliances as they ministered to his sensual gratifications. Without virtue himself, he was regardless of it in others; nor did he believe in its existence. Avarice, ambition, vanity, or other modification of selfishness, was, in his estimate, the only spring of human action. Hence all were alike to him, he felt neither sympathy nor hatred; little gratitude to friends, or resentment against enemies. Conduct was viewed in regard to self only. Observing on the tortur-

ing cruelties practised by the Earl of Lauderdale in Scotland, he remarked, “I perceive that Lauderdale has been guilty of many bad things towards the people of Scotland ; but I cannot find that he has acted in anything contrary to my interest.” Therefore all seemed passable with this cruel minister.

Notwithstanding these serious drawbacks in the character of Charles, he kept up his popularity with the multitude, chiefly from that rakish hilarity which, with the unreflecting, often wins affection, though it cannot procure esteem. Some good things, it may be added, emerged in his Sybarite reign ; but the chief have been glanced at, and little remains for separate notice. Although so indifferent in conduct, the quick observance of the royal epicure, and his early experience in life, made him often shrewd and just in his aphoristic utterances.

Upon Lord Clarendon’s hesitating to accept so large a gift as 10,000 acres of fen-land, the king told him he “had better be envied than pitied.” His rejoinder to his royal brother, that “nobody would kill King Charles to make way for King James,” was true enough. His rebuke of Penn was felicitous. “Friend Charles,” said the future Pennsylvanian legislator, “why dost thou not keep on thy hat?” “ ‘Tis the custom of this place,” replied the king, “for only one person to remain covered at a time.” When Leti told Charles that, were he as wise as Solomon, he feared he should not be able to write the history of the court without giving some offence, the king smartly answered, “Why, then, be as wise as Solomon ; write proverbs, not histories.” Upon Lord Keeper Guildford seeking to provide for a not very reputable person, the king observed, “It is strange that every one of my friends keeps a tame knave.”

The hospitals of Greenwich and Chelsea were indebted

to the king for some pecuniary aid. The Royal Society, for experiments in natural philosophy, obtained letters patent in this reign; but it had its origin under the Commonwealth. Among its earliest members were Dr. Ward, Dr. Wallis, Sir William Petty, and Viscount Brouncker. His lordship was the first president of the Society, and held the situation fifteen years, advancing its interests by his learning and profound mathematical knowledge.

There were some writers of intellectual eminence who lived within this period, whose names and principal works merit notice. Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood, died in 1657. John Selden, author of the "History of Tythes," and of "Table Talk," the last a posthumous publication; Thomas Hobbes, the sage writer on politics, morals, and metaphysics; Isaac Barrow, eminent mathematician and divine; Jeremy Taylor, "Holy Living and Dying;" Algernon Sydney, "Discourses on Government;" Sir Thomas Browne, "Urn Burial," and "Vulgar Errors;" Thomas Fuller, "Church History," and "The Worthies of England." Among historians were Lord Clarendon, Whitelocke, Dugdale, and May. The works of the voluminous Prynne on law, records and antiquities amount to upwards of forty-three volumes in folio and quarto. Other contemporary writers were John Milton, Butler, Andrew Marvel, Isaac Walton, Walker, Shirley, Cowley, and Roscommon.

The style of costume changed with manners after the Restoration. Charles's beauties were the very reverse of their mother's in dress as in demeanour. The starched ruff, steeple-crowned hat, and the stately fardingale were banished with the gravity and morality of their wearers. A studied negligence, or elegant *déshabille* was the prevailing taste, and which has been made familiar from the

portraits of the period. The costume of males did not improve. The most elegant and picturesque style of dress ever worn in England appears to have been under Charles I. from 1625 to 1648. It was the Vandyke dress, being the habit in which that artist painted, and is frequently seen on the stage.* It degenerated into extravagance under Charles II., when the periwig and petticoat breeches were introduced; and the doublet, which at the beginning of his reign was very short, was greatly lengthened, and assumed the form of the modern coat.

CHAPTER XIV.

JAMES II. TO HIS ABDICATION.

Royal Idiosyncracy.—Servility of the High Church, and the Opening afforded for Despotism.—Anti-Popery of the Nation.—Infatuated Measures of the King.—Secret Meetings of the Patriots; Invitation to the Prince of Orange from the Whigs; Arrival of the Prince in England.—Meeting of the Convention Parliament.—Differences of the two Houses; the Prince brings them to Terms.—Wise Conduct of the Commons; the Bill of Rights.—Settlement of the Constitution.—Triumph over the Conspiracy of Crowned Heads.—Exile and Death of James II.—Conclusion of the Stuart Era.

THE brief reign of James comprises little to be noted from its bearing on civilised progress. The most remarkable feature it offers is the royal idiosyncracy, of a prince quietly acceding to the throne of a powerful state, almost immediately after losing possession of it from inordinate

* History of British Costume.

zeal to impose his individual faith on an adverse community. It has a second feature of interest in the national unanimity with which this bigoted conceit was resisted, and the sovereignty of three kingdoms, without violence, transferred to an alien dynasty.

By the transfer of the crown to the Prince of Orange, chiefly on account of the Romish tendencies of his predecessor, the kingly office became identified with the future maintenance of the Protestant faith, and so far the long feud between the new and ancient religions was closed. It had subsisted, with different degrees of animosity, from the Reformation, and under the successive phases of Episcopacy, Presbytery, and Independency, had become associated with co-relative claims of freedom or despotism. The conflicting elements had varied in the proportion in which they had entered into the struggle in its earlier and later stages; but on the accession of James religion had become paramount to civil considerations. So indifferent or secondary had the public liberties become in general estimation, that it is probable had the designs of the king been limited to the establishment of secular absolutism he might have succeeded; for Charles II. had left the way open to him by the mastery he had obtained over the Whigs and municipalities, cooperating with the doctrine of passive obedience, which the high church party had diffused through the realm. One of the parliaments of Charles had all but accepted the yoke of slavery. The degraded House of Commons which met at Oxford in 1665, and passed the Five Mile Act, interdicting the approach of any nonconformist minister within five miles of any town unless he had previously taken the oath of non-resistance, was very near imposing the same oath on the entire nation. A bill for the purpose was introduced, and it

would have been carried, the House being equally divided, but for the accident of three new members having been chosen, who voted against it. But though the bill was lost, the bishops and parsons acted as if it had passed, and their sermons and pastoral letters sounded as loud a note as that which Laud and Manwaring had pealed on the divine right of kings.

A portion of this spirit survived in the new reign. Some of the bishops and peers were servile enough to take part in the ceremonies of the public introduction of the ambassador of the pope at the court of James. The judges, with the benchers and barristers of the Temple, sanctioned the dispensing power; and the Church might have given its aid in the establishment of arbitrary rule, had not their own rights been openly threatened by the king's mandate, requiring the clergy to read from their pulpits his new catholic indulgence. Against this outrage only seven bishops petitioned, but the parochial clergy evinced a more refractory spirit, not more than 200 out of 10,000 complying with the king's will. The body of the nation, too, was thoroughly anti-popish, and its conscience not to be coerced in the choice of a religion. Churchmen and Dissenters, Tories and Whigs perceived, by the undisguised measures of James; by his introduction of papists into the army, his councils, the magistracy, and on the bench; by the new modelling of confirmation; his forcible interference with the rights of the universities; his establishment of an ecclesiastical commission for the cognisance of spiritual offences; his embassy to the pope; his assumption of a dispensing power in respect of the penal statutes; and his insidious attempt to establish liberty of conscience; that is, liberty for his own sect first, and an intolerant ascendancy afterwards—that Protestantism was imperilled. With this

impression they one and all, comprehending in the number some of the king's most trusty officials, his nearest personal friends, and even his own children, seceded from their allegiance to the infatuated monarch, and transferred it to his son-in-law, William of Nassau.

So complete a defection is unprecedented, and occurred without public disturbance. Profound tranquillity reigned throughout the country, and the administration of William III. was submitted to as if he had succeeded in the most regular manner to the abdicated throne. The fleet received his orders; the army without murmur or opposition allowed him to remodel them, and the city of London promptly supplied him with money for present exigencies. Such is the omnipotence of public opinion, and such the ease and safety with which a great political revolution may be effected when the people are unanimously bent on its consummation. But it is essential to bear in mind the chief motive force by which the happy deliverance of the Orange accession was effected. It was not the action of a political principle, but of the more vital one of religion, that achieved the triumph. From the general proclivity already remarked which closed the reign of Charles and opened that of James, it is manifest that the spirit of civil liberty was dead, or languishing, and that of Protestantism alone survived. It was the sturdy old cry of "No Popery," which recalled it into life, depriving its stolid assailant of all aid, sympathy, or resource, and paving the way for national liberation both from popery and despotism.

Contemporary events in France helped to inflame the existing aversion to the ancient worship. Just before the meeting of the English parliament in 1686, Louis XIV. revoked the edict of Nantes, that had been passed by Henry IV. in 1598, and which is reputed to have been

framed by the historian De Thou. Atrocious cruelties had preceded and followed the revocation. At Nismes alone, 60,000 Protestants were forced in three days to abjure their religion. Louis's missionaries were dragoons, whence the name *dragonnades*, as memorably infamous as that of noyades in the annals of political frenzy of a later period. In the course of the year, 15,500 refugees arrived from France and settled in Spitalfields, where they established the silk manufacture. This large immigration, accompanied, doubtless, with full details of papal violence, could not fail to excite indignant sympathy, and accelerate and facilitate the revolution in England. The misguided French monarch assisted the movement, though opposed to it, retaining James in annual pay, like Charles, for the establishment of popery, in another impolitic direction. While the armament of the Prince of Orange was preparing, Louis declared war against Germany, which unexpected employment of the French force left the prince at full liberty to pursue his designs on England. By this diversion the Dutch felt relieved of all apprehension in regard to the security from French invasion of the States, and public securities in Holland rose 10 per cent.

Two extreme parties, though directly opposite in principles and measures, may be considered in an equal degree to have contributed to the revolution; one representing the Catholic, the other the Protestant interest. Of the first, James may be considered to have been the head, and who, from the commencement of his reign, was assisted by a secret cabal of papists, prompted by the unprincipled Sunderland, and composed of the Lords Arundel, Belasyse, Powis, Castlemain, Talbot, and Father Petre, whom the king privately consulted. The violent measures emanating from this source gave rise to the

second, or Protestant party, consisting of Whig noblemen in correspondence with the Prince of Orange, who may be reckoned its foreign head, as the king of France was of the entire Catholic confederacy.

Although the prince had never evinced a froward spirit of interference in English affairs, it is unlikely one so penetrating would be insensible to the many contingencies impending in England, that might by judicious conduct be made subservient to his ambition. His first visit to this country was in 1669, when he was entertained by the universities, and made a very favourable impression of superior abilities and conduct. He was then in his eighteenth year, and though the Princess Mary, the daughter of the Duke of York, was only in her eighth year, the project of a connubial alliance is conjectured to have been then conceived. This event was actually consummated in 1677, by his marriage with the princess, who, after her father up to 1688, was next in order of succession to the English throne. This eventuality long continued in a likely train of fruition from the probable success of the Exclusion Bill, and James's extreme religious unpopularity.

But the unexpected birth of a heir apparent in 1688 immediately put aside the presumptive rights of Mary to the succession. The Orange party vehemently denied the legitimacy of the infant Prince of Wales, representing it as a supposititious child clandestinely introduced with the aim of substituting a Catholic for a Protestant successor. This scandal served for popular excitement, and to keep up the direct claims of the Princess Mary; but there appears to have been little or any foundation for its promulgation. The pregnancy of the queen and the birth of James Francis Edward were well-established facts; the

royal parturition had been attested by an unusual number of witnesses — twenty-two females, some of them ladies of the highest rank, and nineteen noblemen, gentlemen, and physicians, many of them Protestants, deposing on oath before the privy council to the queen's delivery of the prince. However, the public was not in a humour to yield to the ordinary rules of evidence when they militated against the preferential pretensions of the Orange family.

This incredulity of the people smoothed the course of the revolution, to which the previous visits of the Prince of Orange to England had contributed. Both from Protestantism and from being head of the Dutch commonwealth, the sympathies of the prince were naturally with the party in England known to be most opposed to the despotic encroachments of the Stuarts. Consequently he had cultivated their friendship, lived much among them, and became fully acquainted with the views and sentiments of Lord Russell, Sidney, and other leading patriots. Such intimacy had early awakened the suspicion of the court, and appears to have excited the jealousy of the late king. Upon one occasion the prince was dining with Charles, when, the conversation turning on national grievances, William observed, that the popular party seemed the most numerous. "That is," retorted the witty monarch, "because you mix with no other."*

* The early history and personal bearing of the Prince of Orange must have established indelible prepossessions among his English friends. He seems never to have known a youthful age, but, like the second Pitt, to have burst on the world in full manhood. "Since Octavius," says Macaulay, "the world had seen no such instance of precocious statesmanship. At seventeen, a skilful diplomatist. At eighteen, he sat among the fathers of the Commonwealth, grave, discreet, and judicious as the oldest among them. At twenty-one, in a

These connexions rendered Holland the asylum of all malcontents. The refugees of Monmouth's disastrous enterprise, and all who had been expatriated on the score of liberty or religion, fled to the young Stadholder as their saviour and future restorer to their homes, freedom, and Protestantism. The Hague became the centre of intercourse, and a regular communication was kept up between the exiles and their friends in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. In England this was chiefly managed by Lord Danby, the Earls of Devonshire and Manchester, Lord and Lady Churchill; in Scotland by Lord Stair and Sir John Dalrymple. The English Whigs for council held secret meetings in various places, their more serious gatherings being in the gloomy Norman vault of the old mansion called Lady Place, or Hurley House, situated on the picturesque winding of the Thames between Henley and Maidenhead.*

Affairs being ripe for a more conclusive movement, the association met at the house of the Earl of Shrewsbury, June 30. 1668. Here a formal invitation to the Prince of Orange was agreed to, subscribed in cipher by the Earls of Devonshire, Danby, and Shrewsbury, the Bishop of London, Admiral Russell, Lord Lumley, and Henry Sidney, brother of the Republican Algernon, and afterwards Earl of Romney. The substance of the address to

day of gloom and terror, he was placed at the head of the administration. At twenty-three, he was renowned throughout Europe as a soldier and politician. He had put domestic faction under his feet; he was the source of a mighty coalition; and he had contended with honour in the field against some of the greatest generals of the age." — *Hist. Eng.* vol. ii. p. 166. It may be doubted whether the sequel of the king's career was quite equal to the extraordinary commencement forcibly described by the historian.

* *Pict. Hist. vol. iii. p. 794.*

the prince was, that of the common people, nineteen out of twenty were impatient for a change, and that the nobility and gentry, though they did not express themselves with equal freedom, were animated with like sentiment; that if the prince were to land with a force, he would be joined by the chief part of the army; that the present was a most favourable moment; and that the subscribers, with others, were ready to join him.*

The address, in Sidney's handwriting, was privately conveyed to the prince by Admiral Herbert (Earl Torrington), and was found among King William's papers after his death.† All the hopes it held out to him were verified by the result of the enterprise; and the only disappointment the prince experienced was a little tardiness after his landing in his Whig confederates joining him, or rising in his favour in their respective localities.

The sequel of this great undertaking equalled in wisdom and boldness its preliminary arrangement, and which it will be sufficient shortly to recapitulate. The programme of William was inscribed on his banner, "The Protestant religion and liberties of England." Underneath, *Je maintiendra* ("I will maintain"), the motto of the House of Nassau. The prince landed at Torbay, November 5. 1688, with a military force of only 16,000, while that of James amounted to 40,000; but the whole of which was disaffected with the exception of Irish Catholics. On the 18th of the following month he reached London, and received the congratulations of the corporation of the City, and of many of the nobility and gentry. On the 23rd, he summoned to meet him at St. James's the aldermen and common council of London,

* Ling. Hist. vol. xiv. p. 214.

† Jesse's Memoirs from the Revolution, vol. i. p. 41.

and all those who had been members in any parliament held in the reign of Charles II. On the 25th, the House of Lords to the number of ninety met at Westminster, and advised the prince to send circulars, calling on the counties, universities, cities, and boroughs to send representatives to meet January 22nd. Next day those who had been members of parliament in the reign of Charles, and the London corporation, waited on the prince, and expressed their concurrence in the advice of the Lords for the assembling of national representatives. Under this joint authority, the Convention Parliament, so called from not being convened by royal writ, assembled at Westminster, and each House having chosen its speaker, a letter was read from the prince, recommending dispatch and unanimity in their proceedings.

The first question debated in the Lords was a vital one. It was, "Whether the throne, being vacant, it ought to be filled up by a regent or a king." This great point was only carried against a regency by 51 to 49, and shows that a large proportion of those concurrent in the revolution only viewed it as a temporary, not a permanent, settlement of the descent of the monarchy. The next resolve of the Lords, by 55 to 46, that there was an "original contract between king and people," was perhaps a gratuitous affirmation without tangible record, but was of popular import, and a decided improvement on the divine or hereditary right of kings to govern.

The Commons, on the 28th, resolved, "That King James II., having endeavoured to subvert the constitution, by breaking the original contract between king and people, and, by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons, having violated the fundamental laws, and withdrawn himself out of the kingdom, hath abdicated the government, and the throne is thereby vacant." The

31st was a public thanksgiving day for the happy deliverance ; but on Feb. 2nd the Lords subjected to close criticism the resolution of the Commons, and sent it back. They objected to the word *abdicated*, and put *deserted* ; and omitted the words that *the throne is thereby vacant*. Long and warm altercations ensued, but ultimately the Lords agreed to the Commons' resolution without any amendment.

During the interregnum in the executive government, the Prince of Orange had abstained from all interference with the proceedings of both houses. But at this juncture his patience appears to have been exhausted, and not liking probably some of the doctrines broached on the subsisting rights of the runaway James and his infant son, coupled with the narrow majority against the regency, he assembled the Lords Halifax, Shrewsbury, and Danby, with other influential persons, and opened his mind to them. Hitherto, he told them, he had refrained from interfering in their debates ; adding that he had come over at their desire to defend the liberties of the country : that as respected a regency, such a measure might be a wise one, but if the selection fell upon him he should certainly decline it. On the other hand, if they decided on raising the princess his wife to the throne, and making him dependent on her courtesy — much as he respected her virtues — yet he would accept of no dignity dependent on the life or will of another. He concluded with intimating, that should any of these schemes be adopted, he would leave them to settle the government, and retire to his own country.

These intimations had the desired result. A resolution was forthwith passed by the Lords that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be declared king and queen ; but that the sole regal power should be in the

prince only, in the name of both. The numbers on this occasion were 65 to 45. But the Commons delayed to concur in this hasty settlement of the crown, and, wiser than their predecessors at the Restoration, postponed their concurrence until they had completed their famous declaration for the security of the public liberties. Upon the 12th of February they were ready, and the vote of the Lords was carried in the Commons. Upon this day the Princess Mary arrived from Holland, and upon the day following both Houses attended the Prince and Princess of Orange with the declaration of rights and liberties, and which William with some reluctance subscribed. It constitutes the celebrated Bill of Rights, which after some months became a statute of the realm. It is a noble instrument, but too familiar to all Englishmen to be here described. Suffice to say, that it distinctly enunciated and guaranteed to the nation all those constitutional, judicial, and personal securities against arbitrary acts of power for which it had struggled for upwards of two centuries.

It had other valuable issues. It frustrated, without hardly leaving hope behind, the great conspiracy of crowned heads. Charles and James in succession, assisted by the money of Louis of France, failed to perpetuate Popery and Despotism, and therewith the mediæval barbarisms in religion and government which have weighed on the progressive destinies of France, Spain, Italy, and other Catholic states. In England the design had been sought to be compassed by iniquitous means, by studied dissimulation, perjury, and lies; iniquities of policy in the Stuarts, which countenanced the gravest imputed doctrines of Rome, namely, that the end justifies the means; and that faith need not be kept with heretics. But all devices failed; the enervating thraldom was

escaped, and civilisation immeasurably accelerated. The gain was not to England only, it extended to all those vast regions of the globe — to all the colonies and territorial dependencies beyond number or measure, of which she has been the founder, nursing mother, or protector in America, in Africa, the far East, and to where the ends of the earth meet, in Australia, — and this too not for time present or past, but an unknown futurity, and unknown and numberless communities. If the merits of men are valued by their services, how inestimable are the services of those great patriots who, from first to last, battled against the Stuarts for Protestantism and Freedom against Bigotry and Slavery !

The sequel of the last crowned head of an erring race may be soon told. James had hardly any private virtues to redeem his public errors. He was a dull man, harsh and obdurate in temper, and without the gaiety, wit, shrewd sense, or affable good nature of his predecessor. Sincere he doubtless was in his faith, and disinterested, even to weakness, in its maintenance ; but it is extraordinary that one ingenuous enough to avow his own sentiments, at whatever risk, should wish by every means, fair or foul, to deprive others of the same privilege. Bravery has been accredited to him, but his courage was problematical ; he did not evince it at the battle of the Boyne, nor in some incidents of the Dutch war. If not actively, he was passively, cruel ; the rewards he lavished on Judge Jeffreys, and the unfeeling jests in which he indulged on the bloody assizes of that atrocious ruffian, who had the spite of a Dionysius with the morals of a pothouse, are an indelible stain on his memory. He had the character of a man of business, but he seems to have merited it more by dogged industry than dispatch or discrimination. He was twice married, first to a daughter of Lord Clarendon, and next to the

young Duchess of Modena ; by the former he had a large family, all of whom died young except the Princesses Mary and Anne, who succeeded to the throne of England. Neither his marital engagements nor his cold and formal manners had preserved him from the libertine examples of his brother, and he had several avowed mistresses ; but for what order of merit they were chosen has formed a dubious point among inquirers. However, his discernment in his first choice of Arabella Churchill, the sister of Marlborough, seems to have been underrated ; the testimony of De Grammont*, upon the ocular faith arising out of an equestrian accident to Arabella, shows that she was not wholly so uninteresting or plain a girl as Mr. Macaulay, from rooted dislike of a mean but not meritless family, has set forth.

James survived his abdication ten years, and wrote, or caused to be written, some autobiographical memoirs. His exile was not happy. With the failure of his fortunes his heart and hopes seemed to have failed ; and on one occasion he acknowledged that “Heaven fought against him.”† Religious melancholy clouded his retirement, and he sought rest, but found none. He visited the rigid monks of La Trappe, conversed with the abbot, and partook of their frugal meal of roots, eggs, and vegetables. This became with him an annual pilgrimage. An anchorite who lived in the depths of a neighbouring forest, and whose life was more mortifying than that of the monks, became an object with him of curious inquisition. All was unsatisfactory ; he became weary of life, wished for death, and prayed for it, and it finally came to his relief. He died at St. Germains, Sept. 16. 1791, aged sixty-eight.

* Memoirs of Count Grammont, p. 282. Bohn's edition.

† Memoirs of the Stuarts, vol. iv. p. 427.

The period from the accession of the Stuarts to the Revolution cannot be too deeply studied. It is luminous in political science, and replete with vivid practical illustrations of all the theories, all the opinions, and all the social combinations of which human nature appears capable. It is more instructive than the histories of Greece and Rome. The classic ages partook, in their political and mythological character, more of their immediate Asiatic derivation than of modern European elements ; but the rapid vicissitudes of the seventeenth century were the direct effusion of the feudal age of Europe in combination with the new dispensation of Christianity. Consequently the problems worked out in the stirring era of the Stuarts, both in Church and State, are strictly relevant to existing life and practice. All systems were tried ; all religious denominations and all political parties had their alternation of triumph and humiliation. Singly, none of them were found self-existent or capable of universality or permanence ; neither Puritan, Presbyterian, nor Prelatist, with their respective secular adjuncts of republicanism, monarchy, or absolutism.

What, then, may be the leading conclusion from this cycle of experiments ? Precisely that which events themselves fashioned and forced on the acceptance of the nation. The great settlement of 1688 comprehended all pressing exigencies. It gave a rampant victory to no party, nor suffered any to be ruthlessly trampled upon, but defined and respected the rights of all ; while it definitely foreclosed what the struggle of a century had proved universally hateful, — popery and bondage.

The period under notice had a moral as well as religious and political exemplification. Extremes in manners were proved uncongenial to the national regimen, and neither the austerities of the Commonwealth nor the licentious-

ness imported with the Restoration were found native to the soil of England.

It may be remarked, further, that all the civil and religious struggles, strife, and commotion which agitated this country in common with the rest of Europe, had one primary source. It was the Reformation that opened for all the fountains of the great deep. In the great reservoir of Popery, morals, religion, arts, science, and politics were all enclosed. But nations were refreshed, if disturbed, by the irrigating deluge which followed the wide rent made in the papal embankment.

CHAPTER XV.

INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS, TO THE ORANGE REVOLUTION, IN AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE, AND MANUFACTURES.

Greatness of the Country not inherited. — Ancient and Modern Rural Arts. — Subsistence the first Object of Industry. — Agriculture of the Romans, Anglo-Saxons, and Normans. — Obstruction from the Wars of the Plantagenets. — Sheep-farming under the Tudors. — Commencement of Enclosures and Hedgerows. — Privations from Scarcity of Winter Food for Cattle. — Improvements in Road-making. — Benefits derived from Flemish Husbandry. — Contemporary Progress of Commerce. — Riches of England at the Conquest. — Trade with the East. — Oppression from Baronial Tolls and Impolitic Laws. — Flourishing Cities of Italy and Flanders. — Staple Towns and London Steelyard. — Lombards and Germans settle in England. — Expulsion of Foreigners. — English Industry gains by Religious Persecutions abroad. — Geographical Discoveries. — Encouragement of Ship-building. — Woollen, Linen, and Silk Manufactures.

OUR national greatness is more the result of production than of inheritance: we were not born great, like Pallas

from the brain of Jove, and we did not spring perfect at birth, but have acquired eminence by gradual advances. Essentially we are a manufactured people, and our progress, like our existing superiority, is the reward of artistical adoptions and combinations. The spirit of popular liberty may have been derived from Saxon ancestors, but the framework of our polity, as of our religion, is, as before observed, mainly of Roman and Biblical paternity. The Normans, though they conquered and enslaved us, were the first to convert a federative community into an integral kingdom, and to confer those primal constituents of public happiness and power — social subordination, proprietary security, and consolidated strength.

Other elements, however, beside nationality, laws, and institutions, enter into the composition of existing civilisation. The most splendid advances of the ancients savoured of the rude state from which they had more immediately emerged, were barbarous in character, and chiefly consisted in the emblazonry of the regal or sacerdotal order, or in architectural magnificence and territorial dominion. They had few triumphs of justice, morals, and industry to boast; only those of superstition, force, and pageantry. In another respect they stood in a marked position of inferiority; they knew little of domestic or personal utilities, they degraded women and made slaves of men; affected to despise commerce, manufactures, and the useful arts. It is in these last that the chief science and glory of the moderns consist, and in this line of superiority Great Britain holds the foremost place. The story of her industrial development is diversified and interesting, and constitutes that element of her fame and power, social order and moral characteristics, which it is purposed in its earlier stages briefly to describe, reserving the more advanced epochs to a later page.

There is little doubt that the earliest of human contrivances were directed to the arts by which subsistence could be best procured. But the problem still continues in course of solution, both among individuals and communities,—How the necessities of life can be most fully made coadequate with the demands of consumption?

After ages of experience there is still everywhere disparity between food and consumers. The great struggle of life is still for bread. In the infancy of nations this difficulty may be easily comprehended. A community depending on the precarious supplies of the chase may be often in want. Even the more advanced condition of the pastoral state does not afford an unfailing resource. Job abounded in flocks and herds, and was the largest grazier in the land of Uz, but he did not escape the trials of fortune: fatal diseases, unfavourable seasons, and the difficulty of finding winter food, often render supplies from live stock or raw produce uncertain or inadequate. The arts of agriculture enlarge the field of production. Industry and science may multiply to an unknown extent the products of the soil. The earth spontaneously yields little available to human sustenance. All the vegetables brought to our tables, all the crops that cover our fields in autumn, and the varied yield of our orchards and gardens, are less the free gifts of nature than the laboured results of man's skill and perseverance.

Indebted, however, as we are, to the rural art, it has not been distinguished by the same brilliant career of discovery as has signalised manufacturing industry. Great changes have been made, and important improvements introduced; still a remarkable coincidence subsists between present modes and implements of husbandry, and those in use 2000 years past. At this early period the

agriculture of Britain was the same as that practised in Gaul and Belgium, into which countries it had been introduced from Italy ; and the last had doubtless copied it from the Greeks, who derived their knowledge from Egypt and the East. One practice may be remarked of our aboriginal ancestors, which is still common in some of the provinces of Spain ; namely, of storing up their corn, not in granaries, but in pits or subterraneous caverns.

As soon as the Romans had obtained a firm establishment in the island, they began to extend their own system of cultivation. Agriculture was an art in which this proud people greatly delighted, and which they encouraged in all the provinces of their empire. When they designed to bestow the highest praise on a good man, they used to say, "He understands agriculture well, and is an excellent husbandman." From the Saxons the Britons did not derive any improvement ; the invaders were their inferiors in peaceful arts, and it is probable the conquered became not only the servants but the teachers of their new masters. But the Anglo-Normans were not less devoted to rural industry than the Romans. Both employed the chief implements still in use, namely, ploughs, scythes, sickles, spades, axes, pruning-hooks, forks, flails, carts, and waggons, but they were of less perfect construction. The plough, for example, had but one stilt or handle with an iron coulter and share, and a wheel attached to the end of the beam. The Norman plough had two wheels, and in the light soil of Normandy was commonly drawn by one or two oxen ; but in England a greater number, according to the nature of the soil, was necessary. The plough was held by one hand ; in the other was the plough-beetle, which served both for cleaning and mending the plough and breaking clods. The beetle continued in use in some parts of this country

till within the last forty years. The oxen were yoked by ropes, made of twisted willow, sometimes of the skin of whales, and which was certainly a better mode than that practised in Ireland in the time of Camden, and continued in the Hebrides up to 1811, where harness was dispensed with altogether, the horse's tail being fastened to the plough or harrow.

The inefficiency of agriculture may be inferred from its inadequate results. About the time of the Conquest the population to be supported out of the produce of the soil was probably under 2,000,000, and the average consumption of each person was certainly below the present; inferior, too, in quality, as well as in quantity.

For centuries after this period husbandry presented few striking marks of advancement. The settlement of the Norman proprietary in England, with the long wars of the Plantagenets for the crown of France, cooperating with the unceasing domestic feuds of the barons, must have seriously interrupted the operations and progress of industry. Ecclesiastics, who ranked among the principal landowners, were also the principal improvers. They were many of them acquainted with the best modes of husbandry practised on the continent, and their intelligence enabled them to apply their knowledge with skill in the culture of their ample domains. Improvements in the breeds of cattle and horses, the embankment of rivers to prevent the overflowing of adjacent grounds, and the beginning of the drainage of the marshes of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, formed the next most valuable advances.

These ameliorations did not compensate for the neglect and depression of agriculture by the lay proprietary. Even under the quieter regimen of the first Tudors, com-

plaints were general of the decay of tillage, husbandry, and population. Both had probably their origin in the preceding period of foreign and internal strife, in the transition from slave to free labour, and in the growth of the woollen manufacture. The bondsmen, so numerous formerly, were either destroyed in battle, emancipated for their services, or enabled by changes of property to recover their freedom. Proprietors were obliged to convert into pasture those domains which their slaves and cotters had cultivated; and while the lands of either party were liable to be wasted in the uncertainties of war, it was soon discovered that flocks and herds were better adapted to such unsettled times, as being more moveable chattels than the dead produce of agriculture. Restrictions on the export of grain, and the increasing consumption of wool, operated still farther to discourage husbandry. By greater refinement in dress, both at home and on the continent, the manufacture of cloth was encouraged; and although the manufactures of England were now considerable, those of the Netherlands were still supported by large exportations, that increased the demand and raised the price of English wool. From these seductions enclosures were multiplied, demesne lands were extended, and the farms of the husbandmen were appropriated to pasture; their houses were demolished or permitted to decay, while a few herdsmen supplanted the yeomen, and occupied, by means of enclosures, the largest estates. A system of pastoral management, lucrative but injurious, was thus introduced; lucrative to landowners, but injurious to rural industry.

Hence resulted the diminished number of the peasantry and the decay of villages and hamlets. Some were desolate, demolished by the greed of the proprietors, others occupied by a shepherd and his dog. The rage for sheep-

farm ing continued during the entire reigns of Henry VII. and his successor. The preamble to a statute, the 25 Hen. 8. c. 13., expatiates on the miseries inflicted on the poor by the increase of sheep and extension of pasture land. The flocks of individuals, which sometimes exceeded and often amounted to 20,000 sheep, were restricted to 2000; an inadequate remedy, as well as impolitic interference with individual freedom, and partially frustrated by the exemption of hereditary land-owners. Under Elizabeth the arable lands in culture were estimated at only one-fourth part of the kingdom. The evil, however, was beyond the power of legislation to remedy. An improved cultivation was reserved for a later period, when religious persecution had ruined the manufactures of the Low Countries: when the export of English wool subsided, and its price diminished, the landowner, disappointed of former high prices, experienced an advantage in resuming the plough, and again subjecting his pastures to arable culture.

It may be here observed, that though sheep-farming had discouraged rural art, it may have been favourable to other branches of industry by which productive capital was created. While it was predominant, the first English treatise on agricultural science was published. Its author was Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, judge of the Common Pleas under Henry VIII. It does not exhibit any novelties of practice, but shows that the operations of husbandry were more skilfully if not so extensively conducted as formerly. Directions are given for draining, clearing, and enclosing a farm; and for enriching and reducing the soil to tillage. Lime and marl are strongly recommended. Fallowing was practised as preparatory to wheat, but not that rotation of crops and fallows which invigorate the soil and preserve its fertility. When a

field was exhausted by successive harvests, the farmer suffered it to rest till naturally recruited, and proceeded to cultivate a fresh field from a part of his pastures. Leases, though not uncommon, were precarious, neither protecting the tenant from the entry of purchasers, nor securing him against ejectment by fictitious recoveries. Fitzherbert recommends that they should be for three existing lives, to enable tenants, whose sole stock is their personal labour, to enclose their farms and divide them by hedges into fields, from which he augurs great profit “by reason of the compostyng and dongyng of the cattell.” Sir John Fortescue had before enforced the utility of hedgerows planted with trees to protect the flocks and herds from bleak winds and sultry heat. It was an innovation that greatly embellished the rural landscape, and gave it a more horticultural aspect ; but hedges and ditches were a kind of machinery that abridged manual labour, leaving the herdsmen, shepherds, and other professors of the pipe and crook, who form fascinating elements in Arcadian verse, almost without employment.

Productive results afford the best proof of agricultural improvement. According to Harrison, an acre in Queen Elizabeth's reign produced as much as two in past times, which he ascribes to the greater skill and thrift of the cultivator. The average yield of corn on each acre, well tilled, was twenty bushels of wheat, thirty-two of barley, and forty of oats and pulse. The farmers had begun to pay more attention to manures ; and those in the vicinity of London used to buy the sweepings of the streets, which, with the coal dust, improved their clayey soils. But a judicious rotation of crops, and the use of artificial grasses for winter provender, continued general desiderata in farming.

Consequently, the means for the improvement and sustenance of cattle were very limited. This gave rise to serious privations, by compelling all, save the most opu-

lent, to eat salted meat a great portion of the year. In the autumn as much meat was cured as would last the winter; and until the spring pastures had become abundant, there were no means of fattening cattle for the table. The fish used, too, were mostly salted, as only those residing near the coast could have them fresh, owing to the badness of the roads and the difficulty of communication with inland places.

It was not until the 28 Philip and Mary, that any regular provision was made for the repair of the roads. In that year an act passed requiring every parish to appoint two surveyors of the highways; and the parishes were to find labourers, carriages, and tools, for four days in each year, to work upon the roads under the direction of the surveyors. Under Charles II. the plan of imposing tolls, to be paid by those who travelled on the road, was resorted to, the tolls to be expended in the making and mending of roads. The turnpike roads were limited chiefly to the neighbourhood of London, and were only gradually introduced into the midland and northern shires.

The progress of commerce under the Stuarts, co-operating with recent geographical discoveries, formed the next advance favourable to agricultural improvements. At the close of the seventeenth century, turnips, clover, and potatoes had been introduced. Some of the exiles who returned with Charles II. brought useful examples of good husbandry from Flanders. In Blythe's "Improver Improved," published in 1649, are the first traces of the alternate mode of husbandry, by the introduction of clover, turnips, &c. between culmiferous crops. The practice did not make much progress for fifty years after; and, although the foundation of good farming, has not yet become universal.

Having glanced at the chief features of agricultural advancement, the next important branch of public industry may be traced. The production of the raw material of commodities must precede the interchange of them, and the first and most urgent production is that of the food of the people. The order of this brief exposition, therefore, has been in a natural course in showing the first steps by which national subsistence has been augmented.

The native riches of England must, from the earliest period, have made her a mercantile community. She was renowned for carrying on a trade in tin with the Phenician states, before the landing of Julius Cæsar. Relatively to her neighbours, she had become a rich country at the time of the Conquest, and afforded almost as tempting a booty to the invaders as Peru and Mexico to the Spaniards. The Norman ecclesiastics were rewarded with the gift of wealthy abbeys, monasteries, and churches; and many rich heiresses and widows of the Saxon nobles they had slain at the battle of Hastings were the prizes of the lay followers of the conqueror. According to every account the plunder carried over to Normandy after the victory was immense; consisting of coined gold and gold in bars, gold and silver vases, embroidered stuffs, and large drinking cups of the Saxons made of buffalo horn, and ornamented at either extremity with gold or silver. William of Poictiers, who was King William's chaplain, speaks of England as an El Dorado. "That land," says he, "abounds more than Normandy in the precious metals. If in fertility it may be termed the granary of Ceres, in riches it should be called the treasury of Araby. The English women excel in the use of the needle, and in embroidering in gold; the men in every species of elegant workmanship. Moreover the best artists of Germany live amongst them; and merchants who repair to distant

countries import the most valuable articles of foreign manufacture, unknown in Normandy." The rich spoils carried away were distributed among the churches and religious houses of Normandy, and, according to the testimony of the chaplain, excited great admiration both among the natives and foreigners, who out of curiosity flocked to behold them.

Exclusive of London, many other cities and ports had risen into commercial repute. Winchester was long the favourite metropolitan residence of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and a place of extensive trade and manufacture. Exeter was distinguished for opulence and the stout defence it had made against the invader, aided by the foreign merchants and mariners in the harbour, who were compelled by the citizens to assist them. Dover, Hastings, Sandwich, and the other Channel towns, afterwards celebrated as the Cinque Ports, together with Lincoln, York, and more northern places, all at the time traded with the continent, with Italy and France, and perhaps also Spain, as well as the north of Germany. An active traffic already existed with Ireland, Bristol and Chester forming the chief entrepôts.

No doubt the Conquest was ultimately favourable to the increase of foreign connexions, but the first shock was disastrous. The general tranquillity and security were disturbed, property was unsettled, and during the long struggle for mastery that ensued, the minds and hands of men were withdrawn from peaceful pursuits, to mingle in occupations and excitements that produce no wealth. Nor was the system of government and society that was at last established favourable, even after the consolidation of the kingdom, to trade and industry. It was a system of oppression, severe exactions depriving the citizen of the fruits of his exertion, and of motives to labour; a

system of which the animating principle was the encouragement of the martial spirit, to which that of trade is as opposite as creation is to destruction.

At an early period after the Conquest may be dated the successful introduction of the Woollen Manufacture into this country. Its origin was curious. A number of Flemings having been compelled to leave their own country in consequence of an inundation of the sea, they were permitted to settle in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, chiefly, it would seem, with the view of rendering their skill and hardihood in war available for the defence of the northern frontier of the kingdom. But these accomplished foreigners were quite as expert in the use of the plough and the shuttle as the sword. Not mixing, however, well with the inhabitants, they were removed by Henry I. into Pembrokeshire, in Wales. Here they successfully maintained their ground, despite of the hostility of the natives, established the woollen manufacture, and introduced improvements in agriculture. "They were a people," says Giraldus, "excellently skilled both in the business of making cloth and in that of merchandise, and always ready with any labour or danger to seek for gain by sea or land." They form the last of a series of foreign colonisations in England, if we except the settlement of silk-weavers who came over after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The language of the Flemings was nearly the same as that of England, and their descendants are still distinguishable in the district they first occupied in Wales, from their neighbours by the fact of speaking English in lieu of the Welsh tongue.

The wealth and other famed attractions of our isle, tempted over a description of immigrants neither renowned for the use of the sword, the shuttle, nor the plough. These were the Jews, who came over in great numbers

soon after the Conquest. Precluded by their faith from engaging in the wars of the European nations among whom they settled, they limited themselves to trade, and were more strictly men of peace than any class, not even excepting the clergy. Their religion made them generally hateful. Popularly they were odious from their unwarlike character and exclusive devotion to traffic, especially to a species of traffic the utility of which could not be comprehended in an ignorant age. The Jews were not workers with the head nor the hands, nor did they deal in commodities ; their dealings were in *money* only, which they lent at interest. Now the lending of money at interest was considered particularly infamous, almost as much so as forgery or blasphemy at present. It was held to be contrary to the Mosaic law, and was repeatedly interdicted to all Christians by papal authority. The origin of the sentiment deserves to be explained. In the present age it excites surprise that it should have ever been deemed unjust to receive interest for the loan of money ; but our wonder will cease if we consider that in the early stages of society, when trade was in its infancy, those who borrowed had seldom any other object than the relief of their necessities, nor those who lent any other motive than benevolence or friendship ; whereas people are now enabled to employ capital to such advantage as may well afford a remuneration to themselves for their intelligence and industry in its application, and to the lender for the risk which he incurs and the opportunity which he loses of employing it himself. Hence the morality of the transaction is wholly changed ; loans are not sought as doles, nor advanced in charity, but in the way of trade ; and profit may be as equitably realised from them as from land. Rent and interest indeed are almost identical in nature, and governed by the same

economical laws ; both being founded on the principle of lending out what is valuable, and charging for use a premium proportioned to the time it is employed or forborne.

In this way the Jews made themselves useful. They were the first capitalists, bankers, and loan contractors in Europe. They furnished the oil and motive force of interchange ; and wherever commerce had taken root there they were to be found, zealously pursuing, under obloquy, danger, and persecution, their peculiar vocation. Its usefulness was not appreciated at the time, because capital was not understood to be what it is now considered to be—hoarded or accumulated labour.

But the course of this despised race may be certainly reckoned among the promotives of commerce, and their wanderings one of the connective links of mankind. From this and other causes the intercourse of nations has never been wholly interrupted. Sometimes it has been kept up from an adventurous curiosity and thirst of knowledge ; sometimes from the lust of dominion ; sometimes from the zeal of proselytising and to propagate new opinions and doctrines. The ancient Greeks used to wend their way to Egypt in quest of science and philosophy ; the universal empire of Rome and the noble roads it opened up long connected the ends of the earth. Christianity has been a bond of union for centuries, and its spirit is still diffusive — connecting the world by the ties of a common faith, love, and fellowship.

From the East Europe has never been entirely separated. The migrations which founded the present states and kingdoms carried along with them reminiscences of their origin still discernible ; and it is likely, though evidence may not exist, that in the darkest epoch of our annals the local communication between the west of

Europe and Asia was never entirely suspended. If it were, it must have been early resumed; for we read of missions and pilgrimages to the Holy Land as early as the Anglo-Saxon age of King Alfred. It is likely that from visits to the Holy Sepulchre may be dated the revival of modern trade with the East, and which ever since, in one or other direction, has been an established and regular intercourse. The pilgrims, from the first, generally combined the character of devotees and merchants, and by a little traffic sought to replace the outlay in relics and offerings to the shrines and holy places. However, they were not long satisfied with being visitors, but sought to be the owners and possessors of the sacred repositories. This led to the crusades, which commenced in the eleventh century, and for nearly 200 years kept as it were a broad highway open between all Europe and Asia, along which multitudes of persons of all ranks and conditions were continually travelling.

Our obligations to this source are greater than can be described, or with certainty ascertained. Many inventions and discoveries reputed to be of European paternity have doubtless originated in the East, and all the merit of the West has been in their adoption or introduction. The mariner's compass, and the arts of making glass and gunpowder, of weaving, dyeing, paper-making, and perhaps printing, may be considered of this description, of which the first germ or prototype has been of oriental derivation.

One precious gift which Europe obtained from the East at a very early period was the art of rearing and managing the Silk-Worm. Cloth of silk in the manufactured state was first brought from Greece, and was known before the introduction of the worm. The Saracens introduced the art of weaving silk into Spain. The

silk-worm, however, was first brought from Greece in 1146 by Roger, the Norman king of Sicily, who in an expedition he led against the Grecian states carried off a great many silk-weavers, and settled them in his capital of Palermo. From thence the Sicilians learnt both how to weave the cloth and how to rear the worms, and within twenty years after the silk fabrics of Sicily were celebrated over Europe. It was not till many centuries after that any branch of the manufacture was established in this country ; but about this time silks became more common, and which it is likely began to be imported from Spain, Sicily, and Italy, as well as Asia.

One of the oldest and most stable manufactures of this kingdom was that of woollen cloth. But England was famous for the production of the raw material long before that of the manufactured article. Our moist climate and rich pastures were conducive to the growth of a wool staple in length and strength superior to that of other countries. In the ancient history of Matthew of Westminster it is said that all the nations of the earth used at this time to be kept warm by the wool of England, made into cloth by the Flemish manufacturers. These skilful and industrious operatives were for ages the clothiers of most parts of Europe ; and it was by a colony of them, as already stated, that the manufacture was established in England. It is an error to suppose that the manufacture was first established under Edward III. ; it was revived by that prince after the severe depression of industry pending the turbulent baronial wars of King John and his immediate successors. That it was of more early origin may be ascertained by the records of the Exchequer, from which it appears that there were several guild fraternities of weavers established in various parts of the kingdom so early as the middle of the twelfth century.

For a long period manufactures had great impediments to contend against in the mistaken course of legislation. It was meant for kindness, for the protection and encouragement of native products; but the results were illusive. Nor were the motives of this policy commendable, consisting as they did in a rapacious desire to monopolise every advantage to ourselves, to the exclusion and impoverishment of our neighbours. This jealousy of foreigners continued for centuries, and traces of it survived up to a recent period, and may not yet among some classes be wholly extinct.

At one period no foreign merchants were permitted to reside in the kingdom except by special license from the king, and they were obliged to dispose of all their goods within forty days. It was not till 1303 that a general permission of residence was granted, and they were allowed to come safely into the country and live under the protection of its laws. But even this toleration was clogged with various restrictions. The goods imported, with the exception of spicery and mercery, were only to be sold wholesale. But no relaxation was admitted in the ancient grievous liability under which every resident stranger was placed, of being answerable for the debts and even for the crimes of every other foreign merchant.

For various reasons certain commodities were not allowed to be exported. The export of corn was prohibited, lest it might limit the subsistence of the people. That our ancestors should err in the regulation of the corn trade cannot surprise us, since their descendants until lately failed to attain on the subject of this vital commodity absolute wisdom. But they attached great importance to the possession of the precious metals—to the fact of having a large amount of bullion in the bank. Hence both coined money and bullion were prohibited to be ex-

ported; but if the English merchant was not allowed to pay his foreign debts in gold and silver, he was permitted to draw a foreign bill of exchange, which answered the same purpose, and entirely neutralised the folly of this precaution.

In 1261 a law was passed which may be considered the first attempt to establish by legislative encouragement the Manufacturing System. It prohibited the exportation of wool, the chief staple of the country, and ordained that no woollen cloths should be worn except such as were manufactured at home; so that the present desire manifested on the continent and in America to manufacture for themselves, and be independent of external supplies, is far from being a recent aspiration. But the consequences were inconvenient or pernicious, as it is likely will prove the result of the subsequent foreign experiments. In the first place, people could not obtain the cloth they wanted either sufficient in quantity or of the requisite quality, and to reconcile them to this privation they were enjoined or recommended by law to avoid superfluity in dress. Consumers were not the only sufferers. Our exports of wool constituted at this time thirteen-fourteenths of the entire exports of the kingdom; and it is manifest that if wool could not go out of the country, much wealth, both in money and goods, would be prevented coming in, and all the branches of domestic industry which that wealth had hitherto supported would suffer depression.

Internal traffic was not exempt from its trials and difficulties. The barons of these days were remorseless plunderers, and, like the Welsh landlords recently, imposed grievous tolls on the transit of commodities through their domains. Pontage, lastage, baillage, stallage, are some of the names under which these feudal exactions

were levied. The crown participated in the spoil. The lending of money at interest was prohibited to Christians, which gave the monopoly to Jews, and our princes squeezed from them, at second hand, a large portion of their usurious gains, under pretext of licenses and indulgences for the pursuit of their unholy calling. Kings were also great toll-collectors, both on the roads and bridges, and at fairs and markets. In 1245 Henry III. proclaimed a fair to be held at Westminster, on which occasion the traders of London were ordered to close their shops and carry their goods to be sold at the fair, and all other fairs throughout the kingdom were to be suspended during the fifteen days the royal fair continued. The king's object, no doubt, was to obtain a supply of money from the tolls and other dues of the market. What augmented the hardship of this interference at the time was the shocking bad weather, so that not only were the goods spoiled, but the dealers personally suffered from being compelled to eat their victuals with their feet in the mud, and the wind and rain about their ears. Four years after the king repeated the fiscal expedient, with a like recurrence of hostile elements.

The merchants and dealers were not the exclusive objects of regal and legislative attention. The system was complete in all its parts, perfect in its imperfections. Industry was fettered as well as trade. The wages of almost every description of labour were regulated by act of parliament, or the orders of justices at Easter. So also were the hours of labour, the diet of workpeople, and the kind and quality of their clothing. Nothing was left to individual discretion, or to be adjusted by the mutual interest of the contracting parties. If provisions were *dear* they were enjoined by law to be sold *cheap*,

just as if the mischief arose not from the scarcity of the articles in demand but their prices, and that a compulsory cheapness, which facilitated consumption, was equivalent to an augmented power of production in creating abundance.

The general character of our domestic and foreign policy up to the end of the fourteenth century bore a resemblance to that of the East in our own time. In China and Turkey we might recently, if not now, have found a corresponding spirit, distinguished by a similar minute, intrusive, and futile effort to regulate the interchanges of capital and industry, with a bitter and pitiful jealousy of foreigners. They had the misfortune to be our superiors in manufacturing skill, in mercantile enterprise, and navigation; in opulence and pecuniary credit and resources they exceeded us, and we were too proud—too ignorantly proud—to bow to their supremacy. We hated and we envied them, and resorting to the vengeful and spiteful course suggested by these discreditable feelings, we certainly injured them, but in a greater degree injured ourselves. Our aim was to get rich by beggaring our neighbours—to rise by their downfal—a most egregious blunder. But the universal and solid truth of the community of happiness and prosperity, was then very far from the perception of nations. We cannot be isolated in our enjoyments; we can have them in fulness and perfection only by sharing them with others. It is an admirable arrangement of Providence, the basis and guarantee of all individual morality and sound international policy, constituting the universal tie of concord and goodness among mankind. When it is appreciated as it deserves, and it is hoped will be, then we may flatter ourselves that the millennium has begun, and that the height and breadth of that perfectibility which phi-

losophers have dreamt of has approximated to a tangible reality.

“Love one another” is a gospel precept, and not less imperatively the dictate of true philosophy. That men are identified in misery or bliss is an indissoluble condition of human existence, and the chief truth which science and religion enjoin us to inculcate. We cannot be selfish, churlish, or cruel with impunity; our happiness comports only with generosity, justice, and humanity. Certainly then we ought to cultivate a cosmopolitan feeling: live and let live, help and be helped, are the laws of God and of an enlightened social philosophy.

It was by subsequently pursuing this course England reached her existing pinnacle; and from being a poor, despised, and, relative to many European states, a backward community, became the most rich, enviable, and flourishing nation in the world. Her triumphs have mainly had only one source—Liberality. In lieu of persecuting foreigners, she encouraged them; in lieu of driving them from her bosom, she afforded them shelter; in lieu of merely envying their superiority, she tried to learn and improve by their example. It was by steadily pursuing this course that she, at last, excelled her masters, and took the foremost place. How this has been done our limits will only permit us briefly to indicate.

As just remarked, England was not the first of European states to reach mercantile preeminence. She had illustrious precursors in the thirteenth century, in the line of commercial and manufacturing distinction, in the Italian cities of Genoa, Venice, Florence, and Leghorn. These cities were unknown to the ancients; they are all of modern foundation, and their greatness is the result of commercial industry. About the year 1450 Florence had 200 factories, and 30,000 workpeople employed in the woollen

manufacture alone. At a period a little later, but nearly contemporary with the prosperity of the republican marts of Italy, had risen into power the great confederation of the Hanse Towns, comprising in its defensive league Hamburg and Lubeck, with eighty of the more considerable cities on the Rhine and Baltic. The enterprising merchants of these cities and of Italy used to form companies, and settle in England, to advance and manage their trading interests ; much in the same manner, and for the like purposes, as those for which the London, Liverpool, or Glasgow merchant dispatches his agents to India, China, or the Levant. The Lombards became especially noted as the bankers of the metropolis ; and the industrious Germans exercised also in this country all the functions of the English merchant. German vessels were almost solely employed in the transit of goods ; Germans were the brokers, buyers, and sellers, bringing here silks, linens, cloth of gold, tapestry, wines, books, household furniture, and drugs, in exchange for our wool, coarse cloth, lead, tin, sheep, beer, and cheese.

The prosperity of Holland was about a century subsequently. In the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp was famous for industrial enterprise and the extent of her navigation. The number of ships that every day entered and left her port averaged 500 ; the carts and other vehicles employed in the conveyance of merchandise amounted to 10,000, and she contained 100,000 inhabitants. The opulence of some of the Dutch merchants may be conjectured from what is related of one named Fugger. He gave a public entertainment to the Emperor Charles V., on which occasion he made a fire in his hall of cinnamon, and lighted it with the bonds that prince had given him in security for a public loan. It would be gratifying, doubtless, if our own national

creditors would try to emulate the munificence of this wealthy Hollander, by laying on one blazing pile our public obligations. Fugger, despite of his splendid liberality, died worth six millions of crowns ; an enormous accumulation for the period.

The causes of the decline of these glorious cities and states were chiefly political. Antwerp was ruined by its siege and capture by the Spaniards, in 1585, and its mercantile industry transferred to Amsterdam. But the causes of the general decline of Holland were the oppressive weight of taxation, and the natural growth of other countries. Her exhausting fiscal system was, however, a principal cause of her paralysis. On fish, for instance, the price paid to the fishermen was six times over paid to the state in imposts. On one particular sauce thirty different duties were levied. Excess of opulence and the debilitating vices it engenders appear to have been the leading causes of the decline of the Italian cities. They became rich, effeminate, luxurious ; lost their military energies, and became successively the prey of the brutality of Switzerland, the insolence of France, and the rapacity of Spain. The progress of navigation, and the discovery of a new passage to the East round the Cape of Good Hope, also contributed to divert the commercial stream from the Mediterranean ports.

The fate of Spain forms a singular example of vicissitudes. Her empire in Europe once equalled that of Charlemagne, and exceeded that of Napoleon ; for the French emperor was never master at sea, while the Spaniards ruled over both elements. They are memorable instances of the mischief that may be wrought by bad government, since this was the only cause of the decline of their commerce and political greatness. The Protestant Reformation, so salutary to other European

nations, was ruinous to Spain — only made her people more bigoted, her Inquisition more vigilant, and her rulers more imbecile.

This, however, is a digression from our proper inquiry into the industrial progress of England. I had been remarking on the revolutions in mercantile policy; in lieu of a jealousy of foreign merchants, we encouraged them to settle, and that almost the entire trade of the country was carried on by them, especially Italians and Germans. In the dearth of capital and of native commercial ability and enterprise, this arrangement was beneficial, and the legislature had sense enough to promote it. Laws were passed incorporating merchant-strangers, giving them exclusive privileges in London and the chief towns. The German merchants of the Steelyard formed one of the oldest and most flourishing of these associations. The merchants of the Staple formed another mercantile union of great importance, from the number of its members and the extent of its transactions. The objects of the last company were twofold — to buy and collect the staple commodities of the kingdom into what were called the *staple towns*, that the king's duties might be securely collected, and that foreigners might know where to find our chief products in abundance; and, secondly, to export our staple wares. Natives as well as aliens might be employed in the first object, but foreigners only in the export of commodities. Merchants of the Staple were mostly exempt from the jurisdiction of the ordinary magistrate, and only amenable to their own by-laws.

The marked favour shown to merchant-strangers, and the engrossment by them of almost the entire domestic and external trade of the kingdom, form singular incidents in our commercial history. It continued almost through the middle age, and at first produced a beneficial

result in teaching by example. The English merchants, observing the advantages derived by foreigners from having corresponding firms in England, imitated them by establishing factories in several places on the continent. These factories were often chartered bodies, exercising immunities granted for the protection of their trading interests and the settlement of disputes, similar to those now discharged by consuls. The next result, however, of foreign rivalry was not so laudable. Foreigners became a second time objects of jealousy, and lastly, perhaps, of calumny. This was the fate of the Lombards. They were made odious by imputations of usury, and compelled to leave the kingdom. The Hanseatic merchants kept their ground longer, but, under Edward VI., their privileges were declared to be forfeited, and a duty of twenty per cent. — before only one per cent. — was laid on their exports and imports. These blows they tried to parry by retaliatory proceedings, exerting their influence with the Diet to exclude the English from the German markets ; but the English having obtained Hamburg as an entrepôt, and being seconded by the unrivalled fabric of their woollens, obtained firm footing on the continent. The formation of the Baltic Company in 1580, and the shutting up of the Steelyard in 1597, completed the triumph of English industry, and its emancipation from Hanseatic thraldom.

England by this time had made great advances in wealth and industry. Her foreign teachers and auxiliaries had become less necessary. She was strong enough to walk alone, and to kick down the ladder on which she had mounted. This, no doubt, formed the main cause of the revival of the former hostility against foreign competition, and on this occasion, perhaps, was favourable to national strength and independence. The withdrawal of foreigners left an open-

ing for native associations. One of the most celebrated was the Company of Merchant Adventurers. In renewing the charter of this company, James I. confirmed their former exclusive privilege of exporting the woollen manufactures of England to the Netherlands and Germany. Towards the close of the king's reign, the members of this society amounted to 4000 individuals, comprehending the whole body of English merchants trading to the Low Countries and Germany. There were also local companies of merchant adventurers in Bristol and other great towns, enjoying exclusive privileges of trade to particular countries. Thus, an act of parliament of the year 1606 confirms a charter granted half a century before, giving to a company of that name, of the city of Exeter, the exclusive privilege of trading with France. In 1605, James granted a perpetual charter to the "merchants of England trading to the Levant seas," and which subsisted till recently under the name of the Levant or Turkey Company. A little earlier, the East India Company had been incorporated ; and, on the 11th of September, 1603, appeared in the Downs their first return cargos from the East, consisting of pepper, cloves, cinnamon, calicos, and other Indian manufactures.

Prior to the formation of these commercial companies there had been incorporated a body for the improvement of coast navigation. In 1515, Henry VIII. established or extended the celebrated guild or corporation of the Trinity House, at Deptford, for the licensing and regulating of pilots, the erection and ordering of lighthouses and beacons, and the improvement and removal of shoals in tidal rivers. Similar associations were established at Hull and Newcastle. Their objects were humane as well as nautical, and intended to lessen the frequency of ship-

wrecks from the want of skill and intelligence in master-mariners.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century England was at the height of what has been termed the Mercantile or Selfish System. All commerce and all trade and industry were in the hands of monopolists. Hardly a foreign state existed, the exclusive right of trading with which was not allotted to some mercantile association. Internal trade was managed in the same way, the merchants of the Staple enjoying exclusively the right of traffic in the chief home commodities. The manufacturing arts were also tied up. Scarcely an article could be named, the sale of which was not in the grasp of a patentee. The numerous grants of patents had been bitterly complained of under Elizabeth, and were abolished; but they were too gainful a source of royal income to be hastily relinquished, and they were renewed and again abolished under her successor. Even the exercise of industry, if skilled, was fettered. London, Bristol, Norwich, Coventry, and other places swarmed with guilds and incorporated trades, governed with by-laws, which were vigilantly and rigorously enforced against alien intruders, in the exercise of their several crafts and mysteries. The picture is curious, and forms a remarkable epoch in the history of industry. The antecedent monopoly of foreigners was succeeded by a more universal and searching monopoly of natives. It forms the opposite and utmost extreme of the system of Free Trade and unchecked competition, since taught and adopted.

Although England was behind most continental countries in commercial and manufacturing industry, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries she subsequently got the start of them. This accelerated movement may be

chiefly ascribed to two causes well deserving attention. One consisted in the earlier decline among the English of the feudal system, and of the oppressive, unsettled, and anti-industrial forms of polity connected therewith. The second cause of prosperity must certainly be sought in the Protestant Reformation, and the spirit of religious freedom, security, industry, and intellectual inquiry it tended to diffuse. The bigotry of foreign governments kept in abject bondage the minds of the people, and drove into exile their most useful and ingenious citizens. Scared by the wheels and gibbets of the misled and ferocious Duke of Alva, the Flemish manufacturers fled hither in shoals, and were hospitably received. They repaid this politic kindness by peopling our towns with industrious weavers, dyers, cloth-dressers, linen-makers, and silk-throwsters. They taught the making of baizes, serges, and other stuffs; and many of their posterity now inherit titles and large possessions in the counties which first sheltered them from a relentless persecution. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, at a later period, had a like tendency—impoverished France, and laid the foundation of the silk-manufacture in England.

A great impulse was given to mercantile enterprise by extraordinary geographical discoveries. In this direction, the Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, and Genoese took the lead. It was impossible that the discovery of a New World, and of a new way to the remotest regions of the Old, should not awaken throughout Europe an irrepressible thirst of maritime adventure, by which the English soon became distinguished in the persons of their famous navigators—Drake, Raleigh, Middleton, Hudson, Baffin, Davis, Lancaster, and Frobisher. As a consequence, followed the establishment of factories and colonies, and the opening up of new branches of commerce in

distant and hitherto unknown climes. Attempts, however, to form settlements in America, did not succeed in Elizabeth's reign ; but the cod-fisheries of Newfoundland, as well as the whale and seal-fisheries of Greenland and Spitzbergen, were successfully cultivated, and a beginning was also made in the less laudable pursuit of the African slave-trade.

Holland, Embden, Hamburg, Bremen, and other free cities, were now the great depôts and carrying states of Europe. It was the practice of these mercantile communities to transport the produce of the Levant, of the East and West Indies, of France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, to the northern states of Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Russia, bringing back corn and other bulky merchandise, which they stored up to supply the wants of the rest of the world. Amsterdam was never without a store of 700,000 quarters of foreign corn ; and it is said that a dearth of one year in England, France, Spain, Portugal, or Italy, sufficed to enrich Holland for seven years after. The indefatigable Dutch outstripped all their rivals. The ordinary trade between Holland and England employed about 500 ships, but not a tenth part were English. The Dutch sent nearly 1000 ships every year to the north coast of Europe, laden chiefly with the wines of France and Spain ; England, with equal advantages of nautical position, had not one ship employed in that trade. Our navy was in its infancy. Of ships of war or commerce we had few of large size, and these were bought of Hanseatic shipwrights. It was found, by an estimate taken by Lord Admiral Clinton in 1582, that the merchants could supply the royal navy with 14,295 seamen, and 1293 ships, of which only 219 were above eighty tons burden. Ships then were little more than sloops, or at most brigs ; and a far greater force and tonnage of steam craft could now be mustered.

As the English at this time were behind several of their neighbours in the art of ship-building, artificial aids were resorted to for its encouragement. Queen Elizabeth commenced giving bounties to the builders of such ships as carried 100 tons. The practice was continued by her successor, and five shillings a ton paid for every vessel above 200 tons. These notices attest the increasing size of merchant ships through an active maritime period. It was the beginning of a policy which enabled the trading ships of England, under the Commonwealth, to enter the lists in the fierce struggle with the Dutch for naval superiority.

During the entire of the pacific reign of King James, and through the perturbed period of the Civil War and the Commonwealth, the naval and industrial progress of the country continued unabated. On the recal of Charles II. the energies of the people, which had been dissipated but not diminished in the political strife of the preceding twenty years, became concentrated in the various operations of peace. The several manufactures and new productions of husbandry that were introduced from abroad before 1688, not only formed a new epoch, but evinced a vigorous application to the useful arts in the intermediate period. The common highways were enlarged and repaired, while turnpikes were placed on the great northern road, in the counties of Hertford, Huntingdon, and Cambridge. Rivers were deepened for the purposes of internal navigation. Foreign trade was increased by opening new markets, and by withdrawing the alien duties, which had obstructed the export of native manufactures. The command of East India commodities extended our traffic with Turkey, Italy, Spain, and Portugal; and the new branches of commerce opened with the American plantations were wholly in our hands.

Before the Orange revolution the principal textile manufactures had obtained firm footing in the kingdom. The woollen manufacture had extended over the chief districts of the country. Under the Tudors, Bridgewater, Taunton, Chard, and various towns of Gloucester, Wilts, and Somerset, were famous for their broadcloths. The cloths of Worcester, Evesham, Kidderminster, Bromwich, and Coventry, were in good repute, and also those of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. Yorkshire, since so celebrated for its woollens, was then chiefly limited in its industry to coverlets or coarse kerseys made for exportation. Manchester was famous for rugs and friezes. In both Lancashire and Cheshire were made what the natives called *cottons*, but which were woollen fabrics, extensively manufactured in Wales. These various sorts of cloth were mostly sold at stalls in fairs, and in the open market by hawkers and pedlars, and other itinerant traders, whose vocation was the foundation of the existing class of merchant-princes and manufacturers.

A kindred branch of the woollen manufacture was that of worsted, in which, by different processes, wool is wrought into various fabrics. It was so called from Worsted, now an inconsiderable village of Norfolk, where the manufacture first began under Edward II. The eastern districts of the kingdom, especially Norwich and its neighbourhood, continued to be the chief seat of this industry until late years, during which they have been surpassed by the thriving marts of Bradford and Halifax.

The prosperity of the linen manufacture is of more recent date. Up to 1688 the finer linens were mostly obtained from Germany, and those of a coarser kind were only made in England, chiefly by industrious housewives for family consumption. Attempts were made to force the cultivation of hemp and flax; but they were

not successful enough to make linen, like woollen, a staple branch of national industry.

The manufacture of Silk appears to have been introduced into England in the fourteenth century. The throwsters of the metropolis were formed into a fellowship in 1562 ; but it was not till the accession of the Stuarts that the manufacture attracted marked attention. A great impulse was given to this manufacture by a proclamation of King James for encouraging the planting of mulberry-trees. He said the silk-worm might be multiplied as well in England as in France ; and above 10,000 plants were sent into each county for sale at nominal prices. Most of the old mulberry-trees are supposed to have been planted in consequence of this proclamation.*

At the period of the Revolution of 1688 the advantages of trade and the manufacturing arts had become so apparent, that they had almost ceased to be degrading. The change of manners they had wrought, and the inter-mixture of the higher and middle ranks by marriages, induced the gentry, and even the younger branches of the nobility, Mr. Chalmers says, “to bind their sons apprentices to merchants, and thereby to shed lustre on pursuits before deemed only gainful ; to invigorate traffic by their greater capitals, and to extend its operations by superior knowledge and connection with powerful interests.” A progress was thus made towards the general amalgamation of classes and interests, by which harmony of parts and concentration of purpose the country was enabled to advance, with accelerated force, towards its destined goal of commercial and industrial preeminence.

* A more detailed account is given of the spread of manufacturing industry in the author’s “History and Political Philosophy of the Productive Classes,” 4th edit., published by Messrs. Chambers.

CHAPTER XVI.

POPULATION, RICHES, AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ENGLAND
IN 1688.

Comparative Rates of National Progress. — Mistakes from Identity of Names. — Amount of Population and Incomes, Past and Present. — Classification of Families and their Incomes in 1688. — Coincidences between the existing State of France and England at the Revolution. — Number and Size of Farms. — Predominance of Agricultural Industry. — Parallelism between Life in Ireland and England. — Low Standard of Social Life, and its Causes. — Little Progress in Science, Literature, or the Useful Arts. — Variation in Prices. — Absence of Journalism. — Coffee Houses and Political Clubs. — Parliamentary Debates. — Circulating and Itinerant Libraries.

IT IS with the beginning of communities as with the beginning of organic life, the first germs of existence are lost or barely perceptible, and progress is slow and obscure ; but after the early stages of gestation have been perfected, and distinct manifestations of type and vitality have appeared, the rate of growth becomes accelerated. Corresponding laws of development seem to govern the advancement of nations. England in her first origin is untraceable, lost in the womb of time ; but she has always been progressive, though at an unequal pace, as the preceding inquiry has tended to establish. At the close of the first five hundred years, the Britons imherited the impressions left by their Roman masters : upon these, in the next five hundred years, were engrafted the free institutions of the Anglo-Saxons. From both these sources the accumulated gains were not considerable to have been purchased by one thousand years of experience.

But in the succeeding five hundred years society began to advance more rapidly, from Norman semi-barbarism to the confines of civilisation ; and in the two following centuries the rate of progress was still more accelerated, and England had compassed the chief appliances of civilised life in manners and opulence, civil, religious, and political institutions. But how adequately depict her latest and greatest bound, in the shortest period of time, from the end of the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, during which Britain has reached her existing pitch of power and grandeur !

In comparing the past with the present, names are often deceptive ; alike, perhaps, in sound or literal expression, but differing widely or wholly in denominational value. The terms king, parliament, jury, offer apt illustrations, some of which have been already noted. Under the feudal system the monarch was little more than the chief landholder of the realm, with the privilege, perhaps, of a plurality of votes in council, and priority in leading the forlorn hope in battle. Parliament, what was it ? Not legislative ; but an assemblage of petitioners, reluctantly met to devise imposts to meet the sovereign's expenses. Jurors were summoned only as the witnesses of the facts of which they had happened to be cognisant ; not as the triors of judicial issues.

In the names of physical objects may be found a similar verbal confusion of identities. The same words are continued, though the things expressed are entirely different in character. Houses, palaces, towns, cities, hamlets, roads, carriages, and ships, are all familiar terms in history ; nominally they have existed from the earliest times, but how great the discrepancy between the objects signified—between a line-of-battle ship and a Norman row-boat, or the London of the Conqueror and the London of Queen

Victoria? An ancient British town was a Hottentot kraal, or sheepfold wattled around; roads and streets long continued only lanes, hardly wider than an Indian trail. From the comparatively recent period of the Tudors survive remains of palatial edifices, which offer strange contrasts with their modern prototypes in architectural beauty and commodiousness,—Buckingham Palace, for instance, with the dungeon turrets of the old pile of St. James's, or with the Tudor portion of Hampton Court Palace, which was the pride of the magnificent Cardinal, and long continued the favourite abode of the sovereigns of England.

In cities and towns may be remarked corresponding discordances down to the period we have reached in 1688. They bore present names, and in contemporary descriptions enjoyed much of present fame for greatness and industrial superiorities. London at the Orange Revolution was the largest capital in Europe; it had, according to Gregory King, 530,000 inhabitants.* All the other cities and towns are estimated by the same writer to contain 870,000 inhabitants; the rest of the population of the kingdom, to the amount of 4,100,000, living in villages and hamlets. Our existing provincial emporia had then and previously been celebrated as the flourishing seats of manufacturing industry, though the population of the largest of them, Leeds, amounted only to 7000, Manchester 6000, and Sheffield and Birmingham 4000 each. England, indeed, at the close of the seventeenth century, may be said to have existed only in miniature, or to have been merely the nucleus of the mighty empire now spread round the globe. Although

* Sir William Petty in 1687 made the inhabitants of Paris amount to 488,000; Amsterdam, 187,000; Venice, 134,000; Rome, 125,000.

great comparatively with anterior times, she was but a little kingdom compared with her existing self.

Contemporary writers, however, were proud of their country, as we are of ours, and, like us, boasted of the great progress that had been made within living memory, and of the unrivalled height they had reached of opulence and splendour. The causes of this “fulness of felicity,” as Clarendon terms it, were not political but commercial; the extraordinary enterprise of individuals in navigation and trade, by which the produce of the customs in a quarter of a century had been nearly doubled in amount. In 1662 they yielded a revenue of 414,946*l.*; in 1688 they had increased to 781,987*l.** The effects of this prosperity was manifested in the increase of building, and other indications of growing affluence. Sir William Petty, who published his “Political Arithmetic” in 1676, says, that the number of houses had doubled in the preceding forty years; and there had also been a great increase of houses at Norwich, Yarmouth, Newcastle, Portsmouth, and Exeter. The royal navy had doubled in the same period, and the coal shipping of Newcastle increased fourfold. The postage of letters had increased in the proportion of one to twenty. Sir William also notices the increase in the quantity of wine imported, and in domestic comforts and luxuries. The Gobelin tapestry, which originated in Flanders, and had been established in France in 1677, began to appear on the walls of royal palaces and the mansions of the nobility. Turkey carpets, however, still continued to be used more for covering tables than floors, matting of various colours and rushes being more generally employed for the latter purpose. The magnificent carved and gilt furniture, after the

* Chalmers' Estimate, p. 49.

fashion of Versailles, made its appearance towards the close of the seventeenth century, but did not come into general use with the patrician classes till after the accession of Queen Anne.

Sir Josiah Child, a contemporary of Sir W. Petty, corroborates his statements in respect of mercantile opulence. He observes that in 1688 there were on the 'Change more men worth 10,000*l.* than there were in 1650 worth 1000*l.*; that gentlewomen in those earlier times thought themselves well clothed in a serge gown, which a chambermaid in 1688 would have been ashamed to be seen in; and that, besides the great increase of rich clothes, plate, jewels, and household furniture, coaches were in that time augmented a hundred fold. Gratifying signs of progress undoubtedly, but small beside existing Croesuses of affluence. A capital of 10,000*l.* would be now held hardly a notable figure on 'Change in London, or in the provinces at Liverpool, Manchester, or Leeds. Three, four, or five times that sum are the admitted yearly gains of some of our merchant-princes, importers, shipowners, and manufacturers; what their several capitals may amount to it would be hazardous to conjecture; but of their incomes substantial proofs have been afforded from income-tax assessments.

In 1851 a return was made to parliament of the number of persons charged to the income-tax on profits and gains*, distinguishing the number liable into classes of income. The total number of persons assessed was 144,626; the most numerous class were incomes of 150*l.* and under 200*l.*, namely, 38,902 persons. As the incomes increase, the number receiving them lessen down to 775,

* Schedule D., Parl. Pap., No. 27., Sess. 1851.

the number returning incomes of $900l.$ and under $1000l.$ But the next ascending class is six times more numerous, and those with incomes of $1000l.$ and under $2000l.$ amount to 4659 persons; between $2000l.$ and $3000l.$ income the number is 1282; $3000l.$ and $4000l.$ 622; $5000l.$ and $10,000l.$ 617; $10,000l.$ and $20,000l.$ 215; $20,000l.$ and $50,000l.$ 96. 19 persons returned incomes of $50,000l.$ and upwards. How many above that sum does not appear.

No classified returns have been made public of incomes from land or other real property. The great incomes from land about 1688 were few in number. The largest income was that of the second duke of Buckingham,— $23,000l.$; the duke of Ormond $22,000l.$; the duke of Albemarle $15,000l.$ The average income of the 160 temporal lords in 1688, according to Gregory King, was $3200l.$, and that of the 26 spiritual lords $1300l.$ The joint incomes of two or three ducal names of the present House of Lords probably exceed the aggregate revenue of the peerage in King's time. The foundation of the augmented revenues of the landed aristocracy has had two origins,—an increase of value, and an increase of acres; the latter principally from the new disposition of church property at the Reformation and the alienation of crown lands, the former from the influx of commercial riches, the disembowelling of the mineral treasures of the kingdom, and the rise in the price of building ground in the vicinity of London and the large provincial towns.

The general condition of society in 1688, in respect of revenue and its distribution, will be best learnt from the statistical inquiries of Gregory King. His table is inserted in the "State of the Poor," by Sir F. Eden, who considers it a reliable authority.

Classification of Families and their Incomes in 1688.

No. of Families.	Ranks, Degrees, Titles, and Qualifications.	Heads per Family.	Number of Persons.	Yearly Income per Family.	Yearly Income in General.
160	Temporal lords	40	6,400	3,200 0	512,000
26	Spiritual lords	20	520	1,300 0	33,800
800	Baronets	16	12,800	880 0	704,000
600	Knights	13	7,800	650 0	390,000
3,000	Esquires	10	30,000	450 0	1,200,000
12,000	Gentlemen	8	96,000	280 0	2,880,000
5,000	Persons in greater offices and places	8	40,000	240 0	1,200,000
5,000	Persons in lesser offices and places	6	30,000	120 0	600,000
2,000	Eminent merchants and traders by sea	8	16,000	400 0	800,000
8,000	Lesser merchants and traders by sea	6	48,000	198 0	1,600,000
10,000	Persons in the law	7	70,000	154 0	1,540,000
2,000	Eminent clergymen	6	12,000	72 0	144,000
8,000	Lesser clergymen	5	40,000	50 0	400,040
40,000	Freeholders of the better sort	7	280,000	91 0	3,640,000
120,000	Freeholders of the lesser sort	5½	660,000	55 0	6,600,000
150,000	Farmers	5	750,000	42 10	6,375,000
15,000	Persons in liberal arts and sciences	5	75,000	60 0	900,000
50,000	Shopkeepers and tradesmen	4½	225,000	45 0	2,250,000
60,000	Artisans and handicrafts	4	240,000	38 0	2,280,000
5,000	Naval officers	4	20,000	80 0	400,000
4,000	Military officers	4	16,000	60 0	240,000
50,000	Common seamen	3	150,000	20 0	1,000,000
364,000	Labouring people and out-servants	3½	1,275,000	15 0	5,460,000
400,000	Cottagers and paupers	3½	1,300,000	6 10	2,000,000
35,000	Common soldiers	2	70,000	14 0	490,000
849,000	Vagrants, as gipsies, thieves, beggars, &c.		30,000		60,000
	Averages and Net Totals	4½	5,500,520	32 5	43,491,800

The same ingenious calculator estimated the yearly rent of land of the kingdom at 10,000,000*l.*; of burgage or housing at 2,000,000*l.*; of all other hereditaments, 1,000,000*l.*; total, 13,000,000*l.* The yearly produce of trade, arts, and labour he estimated at 30,500,000*l.*, making the aggregate income of the nation amount to only 43,500,000*l.* But this result, it must be recollected, was when agriculture was the predominant industry of the kingdom, consequently when the average rate of profits and wages was less than in a later and inverse distribution of society. However, there is no doubt of the prodigious advance subsequently made in every branch of industry. The revenue of house property

alone probably equals the entire national income as given by King. In 1848 the rental from houses on which the income-tax of that year was assessed amounted to $38,822l,453l.$, and that from land to $34,330,870l.$ As to the comparative incomes from trade, some information has been already given. One elucidatory fact may suffice. In 1688 our entire exports were estimated in value to amount to $4,310,000l.$ *; in 1854 the declared value of exports of the principal articles of British and Irish produce was $87,357,306l.$

The public revenue of the two periods offers another comparative item. James II. had a larger revenue than any of his predecessors. At the accession of the Stuarts the public income was about half a million.† Eighty-six years after, when the king was expelled, it had increased to about two millions, or one twenty-seventh part of the public income of 1854, after the reductions made during the long peace. The increase of revenue under the Stuarts may be partly ascribed to the depreciation in the value of silver money hereafter adverted to. There were also important fiscal changes; new branches of revenue had been introduced, as excises, the post-office, and monthly assessments, and many old resources were either abandoned as unproductive, or abolished on account of their oppressiveness. Hence subsidies were given up, and the whole fabric of feudal exaction, of wardship, marriage, and knights' service, together with benevolences, free gifts, and compulsory loans.

It seems hardly necessary to continue this comparative view. The England of the present admits of no more comparison with the England of the past than of a

* Dr. Davenant's Works, vol. ii. p. 270.

† Sinclair's Hist. of the Revenue, p. 202.

child with the adult. In riches, it may be safely affirmed, she has never been equalled in any age or country of no larger territorial area and population. None but herself can be her parallel in the gorgeous revenues of her more favoured classes, of her great hereditary land-owners, and her princely merchants and money-dealers.

For a counterpart to the past we must look abroad, not at home. With the present state of France there exists many points that admit of comparison. France, like England in 1688, is essentially an agricultural country; two-thirds of her inhabitants being dependent on rural industry. There are few large incomes; the number of Frenchmen with 4000*l.* per annum is small. Property under the law of equal succession is much subdivided. According to M. Rossi the small proprietors, of whom there are 3,500,000, possess half the cultivated soil of the country, each proprietor having an average of about 15 acres; 350,000 middle class proprietors possess one-fourth part of the land, and have an average of 74 acres each. The great proprietors, 90,000 in number, divide among them the rest of the soil, possessing an average of 296 acres.

With this allocation of property many correspondences may be found in the past condition of England. By referring to King's table above, it will be seen that the number of small proprietors, or yeomanry of the kingdom, formed a large portion of the industrial population. The number of acres they owned does not appear, but their incomes are given. 40,000 freeholders of the better sort, 9*l.* a year; 120,000 freeholders of the lesser sort, 5*l.*; 150,000 farmers, 42*s.* 10*s.* a year. Lastly, 3,000 esquires have 450*l.* a year each, and 12,000 gentlemen 280*l.* per annum, which, it is probable, fully equals the average incomes of corresponding types in France.

It may be here remarked that it is more the ownership

of the soil that has been consolidated than its cultivators. Many small freeholders have merged, with benefit to themselves, in the class of farmers, or been absorbed in the more gainful pursuits of trade than the husbandry of small properties. But farmers still continue a numerous body, though they have not increased in a ratio with the population, or in a threefold proportion. This appears from the census of 1851, in the returns of occupations. The total number of farms in England and Wales in 1851 was 223,271, or rather less than double the number in 1688. Of the 223,271 farms 142,358 were in size under 100 acres; 45,752 were between 100 and 200 acres; the rest were larger, rising to 1000 acres and upwards, of which last the number was 771. The average size of all the farms, in Britain is 102 acres, and, in the aggregate, occupy one half the territory of the island. About 9000 small farmers have no labourers except the members of their own families; 170 farmers employ above 60 labourers each; while all the rest have in their service from 1 to 60.

The subject admits of more copious statistical elucidation, and there are readily accessible materials for it; but sufficient has been adduced to warrant a general conclusion on the relative condition of the principal classes of the community at the close of the seventeenth and the middle of the nineteenth century.

Accepting Gregory King's estimate of the population of England and Wales in 1688 at 5,500,000 persons, with an aggregate income of 43,000,000*l.*, and the population, by the census of 1851, at 17,922,768, it would appear that in the interval of about a century and a half the number of people has increased little above threefold, while the aggregate income shared among them has increased three times as fast, or is nine times greater

than at the Orange revolution. There exists no certain data for estimating the national income at other periods of time ; but I have certainly not overstated the present national income in being nine times greater in 1851 than in 1688. It is, I suspect, nearer tenfold, or 430,000,000 in lieu of 387,000,000.

A curious inquiry would be, among what classes of society has this augmented revenue been distributed ? The smallest proportional share has probably fallen to the lot of agricultural labourers ; while a much larger proportional share has gone to the skilled work-people of cities and towns, both from the greater relative increase in the number of urban classes, and the higher rate of wages received by them. The remainder and larger portion of the augmented national income has, doubtless, been the gain of the higher classes, civil, ecclesiastical, and professional, and of the greatly multiplied middle orders of the community.

Some of the larger Social features of 1688 have been partly disclosed in the preceding detail of material elements. One additional illustrative fact may be mentioned. The condition of England at this period seems to have been nearly identical with that of Ireland in 1847. Four-fifths of the Irish prior to the late famine were held to be dependent on rural industry, and a like proportion of the English appears from Gregory King to have been similarly situated in 1688, and to have lived in villages and hamlets. All the attributes, therefore, known to be peculiar to society in the agricultural stage of progress, in the sparse location of the inhabitants, in the small remunerative returns for labour and capital, in the low standard of living, habits, and manners, and in the absence of the emulative pursuits and mental activity which signalise a commercial people, may be

safely predicated of England about the period of the Orange revolution.

The parallel social state of Ireland before the exodus of one-fifth of its people, and the energetic commencement of a wholesome legislation, is within immediate recollection. It was an unsafe country to live in, from defective laws and police. It was a desolate unreclaimed region, abounding in vast tracts of bog or moorland, susceptible of culture by drainage, labour, and capital ; the means of internal communication and traffic by roads, canals, and river navigation, were inadequate ; and the general condition of the people, in their manners, habitations, dietary, and dress, were low and miserable almost beyond description. Despite the progress England had made, I apprehend much of this portraiture would apply to the state of the kingdom and the condition of the great mass of the population in 1688 ; and continued, without any great mitigation, up to the middle of the Georgian era, when the country began to be vivified, enriched, and reclaimed by commercial and manufacturing prosperity.

These parallelisms help to explain the inferior standard of civilisation reached by the middle and superior classes of England under the Stuarts. Even the attainments and accomplishments of those who may be classed among the educated and independent orders offer a striking contrast with existing types of corresponding rank and position. What they were has been graphically delineated in the masterly sketches of a contemporary. But the low standard of social existence the historian has so well described, he has not so fully explained, though the mystery seems to admit of elucidation. After referring to Gregory King's table of incomes (p. 309.) one is impelled to inquire what more could be expected from forthcoming resources ? What refinement in manners,

in literature, or intellect, or indulgence in luxuries, could be compassed by a gentleman with an average income of 280*l.* a year; freeholders, high and low, with from 91*l.* to 55*l.*; and the clergy, with only from 50*l.* to 72*l.* per annum? Families could barely procure necessities with such pitances, and have no command over the elegances or luxuries of life.

The lowness of incomes were not compensated by lowness of prices. Meat, poultry, and sometimes corn, were almost as dear as at present. All tropical products, as Mr. Macaulay remarks, such as tea, sugar, coffee, and spices, were higher in price, and doubtless inferior in quality, to like articles at this day. In the conveniences and comforts of the household there must have been sad deficiencies. The useful arts, which now contribute so greatly to the enjoyments and decorations of the floors and walls of houses, to the utilities and embellishments of the table, the toilette, the hearth and the fireplace, were unknown, or crude and costly in their substitutes. Utensils and implements of hardware were few in number and of inferior metal and manufacture. Porcelain had not begun to be made in England, and the other sorts of earthenware in use, though pottery is among the oldest of arts, were of a coarse and tasteless description. The textile fabrics for clothing consisted almost entirely of woollens of a very homely fashion and quality. Linen, silk, and cotton manufactures, now produced in such infinite variety of beauty and substance, were so rare as only to be accessible to the wealthy. Mechanical inventions, and abundant supplies of the raw materials of manufacture, had not yet contributed their aid to render cheap and good the diversified costume available to all classes of the community.

Before leaving the subject, it may not be out of place,

and indeed is essential to a correct appreciation of the condition of the people, and to the solution of social problems, to note the variations in prices that had occurred in Europe pending the Stuart era. Wages, and the money value of commodities, taxes, the incomes of individuals, and every description of revenue had been affected by the augmented supply of the precious metals from America. The change had begun to show itself at the close of the sixteenth century, but it was twenty years later before any very sensible effect had been produced in England. From about 1570 to about 1640 silver sank two-thirds in value ; and a quarter of corn, instead of being sold for two ounces of silver, was sold for six or eight ounces. In the opinion of Dr. Smith *, the full effect of the depreciation of silver had been felt about 1636, and the value of that metal did not sink lower in proportion to the value of corn.

This great alteration, though little noticed in the conflicts of the time, was a principal cause of the pecuniary difficulties which pressed upon the first Stuarts ; and the civil war itself may be ascribed fully as much to the discrepancy between the royal income and expenditure as to the resistance of the Commons to disputable prerogatives. Parliament kept both James I. and Charles I. at nearly the same amount of revenue, though its purchasing powers had been so materially reduced. Under the Commonwealth the public expenditure was greatly increased, but it was chiefly caused by the nominal rise of prices. The first parliament of Charles II. voted 1,200,000*l.* as the ordinary revenue of the crown, but in the latter years of his reign it amounted to more. The revenue of his successor amounted at his abdication to two millions.

* *Wealth of Nations*, book i. chap. xi.

The moral and intellectual phase of the period under notice admits of an elucidation hardly less significant in its bearing than the meagre appliances for physical comfort and enjoyment. From the accession of the Stuarts, theology had formed almost the exclusive mental occupation of the nation, and had been productive of numerous sects conflicting in their religious interpretations. While these disputationes continued the prevalent engrossment, other intellectual pursuits were held secondary or entirely neglected. It was in truth more the age of astrology, witchcraft, spectral sights, and revelations, than of science and literature, or the useful and the fine arts. In this respect England endured a partial eclipse, and may be said to have suffered, though for a shorter term, a return of the obscuration of the mediæval period.

Religion and morals, however, in common with natural science, became eventually subjected to the experimental ordeal. The two extremes of ethics, one dispensed by the Puritans, the other by the Libertines, had each its trial. Whether the austeries inducted by the Commonwealth, or the gross licentiousness exemplified by the Stuartites was most adverse to sound public morals, there may be diversity of opinions ; but the probability appears to be, as already expressed, that the two extravagances tended to correct or neutralise each other, and to induce that qualified expectation of human perfectibility most consonant to reason, and which may be classed among the more valuable and abiding characteristics of the nation.

The reaction that followed the recall of Charles II. it is likely went further than its authors intended. In their triumph the Puritans had evinced no mercy or indulgence for differences of sentiment or of conduct. Everything in life and manners was to be fashioned and cut exactly to their own pattern. The Cavaliers in their turn were

equally intolerant of dissent. But their object, it is possible, was to discredit the example and authority of their opponents, rather than to render their license the perpetual regimen of the community. This appears to be Mr. Macaulay's view, which he has stated with his wonted force and beauty :—

“ Whatever the canting Roundhead had regarded with reverence was insulted. Whatever he had proscribed was favoured. Because he had been scrupulous about trifles, all scruples were treated with derision. Because he had covered his failings with the mask of devotion, men were encouraged to obtrude with Cynic impudence all their most scandalous vices on the public eye. Because he had punished illicit love with barbarous severity, virgin purity and conjugal fidelity were made a jest. To that sanctimonious jargon, which was his Shibboleth, was opposed another jargon not less absurd and much more odious. As he never opened his mouth except in scriptural phrase, the new breed of wits and fine gentlemen never opened their mouths without uttering ribaldry of which a porter would now be ashamed, and without calling on their Maker to curse them, sink them, confound them, blast them, and damn them.”—*Hist. of England*, vol. i. p. 398.

It was a quarrel, in the excitement of which both parties did and said, as is common in the disputes of individuals, more than they seriously intended. But the contest between the two dispensations was detrimental to the nation; and may be said to have obstructed its wholesome progress from the death of Charles I. to the accession of the Prince of Orange. During this period of forty years little was contributed to elevate the general standard of refinement among the several classes of the community. The clergy, who ought to have been an example and guide to the community, had been declining in social consideration from the Reformation, partly by the loss of the immense revenues formerly pertaining to the great abbots, bishops, and cardinals, and partly from the great

offices of state which they formerly filled being now occupied by laymen. Classical learning was less cultivated than in the days of ecclesiastical splendour. It had been superseded by the more urgent claims of Biblical criticism and doctrinal divinity, which the religious controversies of the period had rendered indispensable acquirements.

In almost every direction, it may be concluded that the age was still deficient in the chief aids which tend to enlarge, refine, and edify the mind. Comparatively, the book of knowledge had not been opened; nor hardly that of rational instruction or amusement. In poetry and works of imagination the past had been most richly productive, and the names of Shakspeare and Milton must live imperishably, like those of Virgil and Homer in the ancient world. The great Bacon had opened the way in natural philosophy, and Hobbes in metaphysical inquiries; but they lived prior to the extraordinary discoveries since made in the unknown regions of astronomy, chemistry, geology, and mechanical agencies. The age of native historians had not begun, nor that of native artists. The sole representative of modern journalism, now almost as potent in mental as steam in physical force, was the dull and meagre "Gazette." Lastly, the periodical essayists, who, by their sprightly and apt effusions, contributed to improve the manners and morals of a later period, had not commenced their useful career.

There was, however, one description of diffusive literature that had commenced, at least in London. This was circulating libraries. At the end of the play of the "Thracian Wonder," printed in 1661, and sold at the sign of John Fletcher's Head, is an announcement that books may be "read for reasonable consideration."*

* *Pict. Hist. of England*, vol. iii. p. 904.

These were fixed libraries; but upwards of a century earlier a beginning seems to have been made in itinerant libraries. In the time of Cardinal Wolsey, there dwelt on the fertile banks of the Humber and the Trent, and on the slopes of the beautiful hills in this part of the county of Lincoln, a select body of reformed Christians — artificers, shepherds, and labourers — who sought to edify their leisure in reading such portions of the English version of the Scriptures as had reached them. As some of them dwelt wide apart, they employed, says D'Aubigné*, one John Scrivener continually in stealthily conveying these and other precious documents from one to another. This of course was before the act of Henry VIII. permitting the Bible to be read in private houses.

Next to theology, politics had become, from recent civil agitations, the chief aliment in every-day life. Coffee-houses were the favourite resort of all who wished either to learn or retail the news of the day. Political clubs had become numerous in London, and the citizens met to discuss questions of public interest, to the great surprise of the Lords and Commons of the realm. The parliamentary debates had already become so protracted that many members adjourned to renovate themselves at taverns, from which they returned like giants refreshed to finish the discussion.

* History of the Reformation, book xviii. chap. vii.

CHAPTER XVII.

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

Public Opinion on the Accession of William III.—Settlement of the Constitution.—Contrasted Results of the First and Second Revolutions of the Seventeenth Century.—Commencement of Continental Alliances; Peace of Ryswick, and the Grand Alliance.—Protestant Interest, and the Balance of Power; Advantages and Drawbacks of their Maintenance.—Connexions of the Revolutionists with the Stuart Family; its Influence on the English Court.—Dutch Favourites of William III.—Irish Forfeitures.—Character of the King.—Characteristics of the Revolution Parliament.—Bounty on the Export of Corn.—General Corruption from the War.—Treason Laws and Property Offences.—Seven Years' Dearth.—Rise of the Monied Interest.—Men of Letters.

THE most progressive aspect presented by the Revolution is in the settlement of the chief questions by which the nation had been long agitated. From the commencement of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, religion had formed the principal pivot upon which the politics and diplomacy of the European states had turned; from which their wars and alliances abroad and their internal dissensions at home had originated; but the protracted feud between Catholicism and Protestantism was closed in England by the accession of the Prince of Orange. After this epoch the reformed worship became a condition of the regal succession, and was further guaranteed by the vast numerical superiority attained by the Anglican church, and which now comprehended within its pale almost the

entire English community.* But though national from the number of its members, and united in the repudiation of papal authority, the church was not agreed on the limits that ought to be set to the Revolution.

Cherishing the dogma of the divine right of kings, and the great majority of the clergy having strenuously preached the indefeasible doctrine under the later Stuarts, they could not consistently acquiesce in the elevation to a hereditary throne of a new dynasty. All they appeared to contemplate in seeking the aid of the Prince of Orange was, the establishment of a regency in his person, either until the abdicated king had recovered from his delusion, or his son, the infant Prince of Wales, if a Protestant, became of age to assume the regal functions. This limited purpose, it has been seen, was happily frustrated, partly from the obvious dangers of a delay, and partly from the reasonable declaration of the prince not to submit to any limitation or division of the kingly office. But of the antagonist sentiment abroad, there can be no doubt from what happened immediately before and after the settlement of the crown.

In the narrow majority of fifty-one against forty-nine, by which it was carried that the vacant throne should be filled by a king, not a regent, only two bishops voted, while thirteen voted in the minority. It is remarkable that of the bishops who refused to concur in the transfer of the crown to a new head, five were of the seven prelates who had refused to read the Declaration of Indulgence of James II., and whose famous trial had given the first impulse to the Revolution. The subordinate

* Sir John Dalrymple, in his *Memoirs*, gives the following estimate of religious denominations in William III.'s reign:—Conformists, 2,477,254; Nonconformists, 108,676; Papists, 13,856.

clergy concurred almost universally in the sentiment of the heads of the church, and also a large proportion of the patrician classes of the laity. In the House of Lords a majority of the members were avowedly hostile to the final deposition of James, though not to the suspension of his power. As to the great body of the people, they were rather spectators than actors in the Revolution, but in sentiment they doubtless followed their religious teachers, if they did not acquiesce, from the popular impression usually being more tenacious in adherence to customary rights among the masses than their superiors.

It is manifest from this representation, that though the nation was almost unanimously bent on arresting the career of James towards the see of Rome, the sense of hereditary right was so prominent, as to preclude the wish of his perpetual exclusion or that of his family from the throne. Lord Danby remarked, three months after the abdication, that, "If King James would only quit his priests, he might retrieve his affairs." But James was not so supple in his politics or religion as the ministry, nor as the first Bourbon. A mass at St. Denis won Henry IV. a kingdom, but the unbending English monarch lost his rather than forego its celebration. But it is not improbable that the reckless sincerity of James was one reason why so many of his subjects remained obdurate in their allegiance to him. In other divisions of the United Kingdom the ties that bound the king to the inhabitants were stronger than in England. In Scotland, the small party of the Whigs alone favoured William; while, in Ireland, the majority being Catholics, both parliament and people adhered to the banished prince. These explanations of the state of public opinion in 1688 are essential to a correct appreciation of the present and subsequent history of the country, since a

latent but extensive leaning towards the exiled family continued for half a century afterwards the chief disturbing element of the realm both at home and abroad.

Except the theological difference on the measure of the Stuart's punishment, no other discrepancy embarrassed the course of the great Revolution. For the entire extradition, now and for ever, of popery and its twin brother despotism, the nation was unanimous. The battle of Protestantism, perhaps in a greater degree than that of civil freedom, had been antecedently fought and won; but constitutional securities, if not a new acquisition, were a triumphant restoration of them, after their wholesale degradation under Charles II. Against any similar reaction the Bill of Rights formed an explicit guarantee, and established that contract between king and people which had long been theoretically maintained, but could not be referred to in any public instrument. After this enactment, no king, without an open violation of the constitution, could assume to suspend the laws, or their execution; to levy money without consent of parliament, or to keep in the kingdom during peace a standing army; the freedom of election and the freedom of debate in parliament were secured. In judicial trials, jurors were to be duly empanelled, and cruel or unusual punishments were not to be inflicted. All grants, or promises of fines or forfeiture of accused persons before conviction, were held to be illegal. Such declarations, it is obvious, struck at the root of the arbitrary acts formerly perpetrated under the claims of prerogative. Other constitutional securities might probably have been included, but it has been considered sound wisdom in statesmanship not to reform beyond the spirit of the age, or the popular demands.

The Bill of Rights was followed in 1701 by the Act of Settlement, under which succeeding kings are re-

quired to be in communion with the church of England ; and after William III. and the Princess Anne, the crown is settled on the House of Hanover, being Protestants. Other clauses of the Act provide that England shall not engage in war for the defence of the foreign dominions of any succeeding king, nor shall the king leave his British dominions without the consent of parliament. Foreigners, though naturalised, are made incapable of any grant from the crown, and no pensioner or person in office under the crown can sit in the House of Commons. The judges were so far made independent that they were secured in their offices during good behaviour, and not removable at the pleasure of the crown. They were still, however, left exposed to a limited seductive influence by promotion. An approach was made to the establishment of ministerial responsibility, by requiring members of the privy council to subscribe their names to measures to which they had consented or advised. This, with some other amendments, was got rid of in the next reign, but it gave rise to the Cabinet in a more definite form, as a portion of the privy council responsible for the policy of the administration.* The responsibility of the House of Commons was sought to be strengthened by the Triennial Act, which limited the duration of parliament to three years ; but as this was unaccompanied by any extension or improvement of the electoral franchise, it was nugatory in influence over the representative body.

There were other gains in constitutional government, though not statutory, that deserve to be noted. At the outset of King William's reign the Commons assumed

* Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. iii. p. 253.

the entire control of the national expenditure by a new settlement of the revenue. Prior to the Revolution, the whole supply for the public service was placed at the disposal of the crown ; but it was now resolved that a fixed sum should be voted for the maintenance of the king and his government, or the civil list, the rest for general or contingent expenditure. Estimates of the charges of the army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous services were to be annually submitted to parliament, and the sums granted for these and other branches of service were limited to the expressed objects of these grants. By the yearly appropriation of the supplies was reserved an efficient control over the ministry, and enabled the Commons once a year at least to arrest its proceedings.

The act for licensing publications of the Press, which had been passed soon after the Restoration, and had been continued by renewal to the year 1694, was suffered to lapse, when all restraints previous to the publication of works ceased, with the exception of dramatic entertainments.

An advance was made to religious toleration by exempting Dissenters from penalties for non-attendance at the established places of worship, and protecting their chapels from molestation. The narrow spirit of the age would not admit a more comprehensive scheme ; and even these indulgences were denied to Papists and Unitarians. Despite, however, of limited progress in this direction and some others, the constitution had been recast and fixed. Although parliament had not deviated further from the line of succession than to reach a Protestant head, yet the Prince of Orange ascended the throne as an elective monarch, with limited prerogatives ; and the power lost by the crown, and which parliament

acquired, transferred the responsibilities of government to the popular branch of the constitution.

These prescriptions of the constitution and government closed the revolutionary drama which opened under Charles I. in 1640. By the intervention of the Restoration, the course of events had been divided into two distinct acts or performances. The first, which began with the Long Parliament, was experimental; but the movement of 1688 was practical, and its leaders, profiting by the errors of the antecedent failure, were enabled to compass greater and more enduring issues. The grievances struggled against in the Civil War were Tudor prerogatives, which the parliamentarians failed permanently to circumscribe; but in which effort their successors, in the second revolution, were entirely successful; and neither King William, nor his successors on the throne, appear to have sought to trespass beyond the limits they prescribed to the power of the crown. But the sequel of the two revolutions contrasted, in one respect, with their commencement. It was the Commons who began and fought the first battle with the Stuarts; but on the recommencement of the struggle with the later branches of this dynasty, the Commons were more quiescent, probably from consciousness of anterior reverses, or apprehension of renewed disturbance to order and property. Influenced by one or other of these considerations, the intermediate classes neither in town nor the country stood prominently forward in the crisis of 1688, but left the aristocracy of Whigs and Tories to organise the defence and settle the final conditions of a constitutional monarchy.

It remains next to set forth, from the leading events of King William's reign, the practical merits of the new or parliamentary government.

The claims of the Prince of Orange to the elective preference of the nation were many and preeminent. His progenitors, of the Nassau family, ranked among the principal founders and defenders of the Dutch republic. He was illustrious not only by descent, but heroic deeds. When Charles II. had concluded in 1669 his unprincipled league with the French king for the subversion of the liberties of Holland, William, though he had barely attained to manhood, proved both in council and the field the great stay of the commonwealth. He had long been in confidential intercourse with the principal leaders of the Revolution. In religion he was tolerant; in politics not adverse to civil liberty. Even his personal affinities would to some be a recommendation, for he was nearly related to the exiled family, being nephew of Charles II., and nephew and son-in-law of James II.

But the public character of the first Protestant and constitutional monarch of England laboured under one signal drawback. His ruling passion was the love of military fame. The excitement of war seemed with him a needful element of life, and any milder stimulant inadequate to rouse in his somewhat dull temperament the full animation of existence. Consequently he was always ready for the field, and under any pretext to involve in hostilities the communities he governed. The United Provinces, after being exhausted by their first war with France, could only conclude peace in despite of his counsels. A like ungovernable passion signalised the rule of the prince in England. Of the thirteen years of his reign nearly ten were years of war. Previously the foreign wars of England had mostly originated in the territorial ambition of its princes, or from their personal quarrels, in respect of family alliances, or they had sprung from religious motives, as under Elizabeth and Oliver

Cromwell, to uphold or extend the Protestant faith. But the wars of King William were political or diplomatic wars, and were the commencement of those entangling and expensive connexions on the continent which have since continued a predominant feature of national policy. The direct tendency of these external engagements has been to foster alien interests, either only remotely, or not at all connected with the vital interests of the kingdom. It was the revival of the connexions abroad which have been previously remarked upon (*antè*, p. 63.) as tending, under the Plantagenets, by the profitless wars they originated, to obstruct national progress.

One cause of the animosity felt at this period by England towards France was the protection it had afforded to the Stuarts. But as this was a limited impulse, in which the continental states whom it was desirable to enlist against France could not participate, the general and avowed object of the hostile confederacies was held to be to curb the restless ambition of Louis XIV. Unless, however, King William by his war in the Netherlands diverted France from the invasion of England, he does not appear to have compassed any other advantage from his arduous contest with the French monarch. After the long, bloody, and exhausting war, terminated by the peace of Ryswick in 1697, France was left as powerful as ever for aggression. Our allies, Spain and Holland, recovered back by treaty all they had lost during the war, but the only stipulation of importance in favour of England was the article by which Louis engaged not to disturb William in the possession of his British dominions. But the love of war made the conduct of William reckless or inconsistent in the object sought to be obtained by his conflicts. In preceding hostilities he had sought the humiliation of

the French king ; but the objects embraced by the treaties for the partition of the Spanish monarchy on the death of the reigning sovereign tended to the aggrandisement of France. It was the secrecy with which William concluded the partition treaties, without communicating them to parliament, or even to his ministers, except the Earl of Jersey, combined with the resultless issues of the previous French war, that disgusted the nation with foreign intervention. The overthrow of the Whig ministry followed, and the impeachment of Somers, Halifax, Portland, and Oxford. In William's next confederacy he resumed the policy of the first ; it was a union against France by England, Austria, and Holland, the leading pretext of which was the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe by preventing the consolidation of the French and Spanish monarchies in the Bourbon family. The king was ardent in his hopes from this fresh European commotion. Upon the opening of parliament, Dec. 30. 1701, he made a spirited address to both houses, calling upon them to assist in opposing the "ambitious and perfidious" designs of France. "If you do," said the king, "desire in good earnest to see England hold the balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by your right improving the present opportunity." The Whigs were again restored to power, and 40,000 land forces voted to act in concert with the allies. But the premature death of William a few months after left the magnificent ideal of the Grand Alliance to be carried out by his successor.

To head the Protestant interest, and be the arbiter in European quarrels, were the paramount diplomatic maxims of the present reign. The first was undoubtedly identified with the principles of the Revolution, and both, it must be conceded, had their bright side of view. They had

become the basis of English policy, and in their evolution at home and abroad depended the prosperity of the nation. A fuller experience than had been arrived at under William III. would appear to have established this conclusion. The two kingdoms, whose ascendancy had in succession menaced Protestantism and continental independence, were Spain and France. But the tendency of their principles may be now tested by their issues in the contrasted progress of these and other European countries prior and subsequent to 1688. It was the papal bigotry of the monarchs of Spain that lost her the Netherlands, and inflicted a fatal blow on her trade and industry, by the expulsion of a million of industrious Moriscoes. A similar disastrous policy controlled the destinies of France in the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and in the efforts of her sovereigns to extend, by her large armies, the supremacy of popery and despotism. Under the influence of these, however, both kingdoms declined, while England and the United Provinces, under an opposite system, reached a high pitch of prosperity. Had either Spain or France succeeded in establishing a universal monarchy, its obstructive influence would have been incalculable, by arresting or retarding European progress in civil and religious freedom, in arts, trade, and industry. The calamity would not have been present, but prospective ; it would not have been limited to England and the continent, but would have extended to the distant future, and to the numberless colonies, states, and empires that have subsequently risen to power and distinction in the western hemisphere.

It must ever be the pride of England that she made a stand against the recoil of herself and the rest of Europe towards the darkness of the Middle Ages ; and it redounds the more to her honour, since her national exist-

ence was imperilled by her resistance. At the period of the Revolution, she could not rely on her existing relative superiority; neither as a military nor naval power was she supreme among European states. The basis of naval power is a mercantile shipping, and the merchant ships of Holland nearly doubled in tonnage those of England.*

At the naval fight off Beachey Head in 1690 the French defeated the united English and Dutch fleets; though this discomfiture, doubtless, in part arose from the treachery or incapacity of the English admiral. But the English had so little command over the seas at this time, that, from the beginning of the war to November 1692, they are calculated to have lost 1500 trading vessels, of the aggregate value of three millions sterling. Besides this maritime weakness must be added the strong hold France had of the country from the prevalence of disaffection, and the fact that both national councils and armaments were often betrayed by the active agency of the Jacobites, who openly or in disguise were scattered in every department of the public administration, from the cabinet ministry of the king to a clerkship of the Admiralty. While England was suffering from all these drawbacks, her Gallican foe was a consolidated power, and had reached a high standard of military development, both in numbers, courage, and the strategical science of her generals. Under these contrasted rela-

* In 1690 Sir William Petty estimated the merchant shipping of Europe to amount to 2,000,000 tons, thus distributed :—

	Tons.
United Provinces	900,000
England (probably Scotland and Ireland included)	500,000
France	100,000
Hamburg, Denmark, Sweden, and Dantzig	250,000
Spain, Portugal, Italy, &c.	250,000

tions, the French war had become almost a death struggle with England, and the noble daring of her people, directed by her courageous and unflinching ruler, in contesting the championship of Europe, was unquestionably magnanimous.

It doubtless entailed enormous sacrifices. For the prize of victory, immense benefits were foregone, and every evil endured to which a nation is liable. Commerce was obstructed, population by the joint ravages of war and famine reduced, and a grinding system of fiscal taxation devised, by which almost every transaction of life and every article of general subsistence was reached. No expedient, however iniquitous, or likely to be ultimately ruinous to the community, did the government demur to, if likely to aid the immediate urgencies of the contest. Parliament was bribed, the morals of the people corrupted, and the pernicious device of anticipating future resources introduced, by which was engendered a numerous host of loan contractors, speculators, and stock-jobbers, whose chief harvest is a nation's difficulties. It is to the extremities of this period that may be traced the practice of issuing, for passing emergencies, exchequer bills; of raising money by lotteries, the stamp duties, the multiplication of the excise laws, and the establishment of a great monetary corporation, to whose irresponsible administration finally became subject private credit, as well as the currency and finances of the state.

Consequently the price paid in disputing with the French monarch the European mastery was not inconsiderable; it might be worth the purchase-money, but it certainly ought to have guaranteed the faithful pursuit of the avowed object for which it had been demanded. This, however, appears not always to have been the case. The Partition Treaty seems neither to

have had Protestantism nor the balance of power in prospect, but was either a spoliation scheme of national aggrandisement, or simply an indulgence of King William's ruling passion. So far the king may be held to have been inconsistent, and made the good of his subjects secondary to his personal delight or ambition.

From foreign connexions and the distractions of home politics the reign of William III. was an arduous task, beset with perplexing cares and difficulties. His ambition being European, he naturally sought to strengthen his continental influence by the solidarity of his British dominions. But in this design he was often thwarted, or had only limited success. In the struggle against his predecessor there had been general union; the danger was a common one; all the nation had been aspiring to for years in religion, civil liberty, and legislation, was menaced, and all parties concurred in resisting the insane career of James II. But no sooner had safety been obtained than the ordinary results of coalition followed, and Whigs and Tories—the two great denominations into which all parties were now resolved—resumed their former relative attitude of selfish intrigue and hostility. William sought to reconcile them, to amalgamate them for the common good by uniting them in the same ministry, but their hereditary interests or animosities baffled all his endeavours in political chemistry to effect a cordial union. Consequently he found himself, soon after his accession, the king of rival factions rather than of a united people, and what most embittered his disappointments was the fact that the statesmen who had betrayed to him the counsels of his predecessor, and sought him as their deliverer, were among the first to open treasonable communications with the exiled family. The Jacobitism of the Tory peers may admit of extenuation, but hardly

any apology can be made for the treacherous intrigues carried on with St. Germains by the Whig revolutionists.*

The excuses made for this defection were quite as reprehensible as its perfidy. They were, in substance, that they had not been sufficiently rewarded; that they had not gained enough by the Revolution, and were ready to try a counter-revolution to mend their choice. To gratify as many as possible of the greedy claimants for compensation, the treasury, admiralty, and great seal were put in commission. But this subdivision told two ways; for Danby, who expected to be again lord treasurer, and Herbert, who expected to be made lord high admiral, with the sole patronage of these offices, were disgusted to see shared among many what they conceived was only made for one. Lord Churchill, who, with his intriguing, had done as much for the Revolution as anybody, thought himself ill used in seeing Schomberg in place of himself named master-general of the ordnance. Churchill received an appointment in the royal household, as did the Lords Devonshire, Mordaunt, Lovelace, Dorset, and Oxford'; but every one of these wanted something better, and had the further mortification of seeing everywhere a Mordecai in the gate: for William kept about the court some of his favourite Dutch followers. Halifax was not satisfied with the restoration to him only of the privy seal; and the highly refined "King of Hearts," Shrewsbury†, appointed one of the secretaries, was distressed beyond

* Mackintosh's Hist. Rev. 1688, p. 577.; Hallam's Const. Hist. vol. iii. p. 167.

† The accomplishments and fine talents of this nobleman were weakened by timidity. He lived long in Italy, and married an old Italian Catholic against his inclination, but to whom he had been betrothed from apprehension of the vengeance of her brother. — *Coxe's Memoirs of Marlborough*, vol. iii. p. 57. Bohn's edition.

endurance to find for his Siamese brother, as second secretary, the sturdy Tory Nottingham, who had done all he could to avert the Orange settlement. One of the most amusing, if not the most deeply afflicted of the malcontents, seems to have been Admiral Russell. With the characteristic frankness of his profession, the admiral makes a clean breast of his position, and reveals his woes to royalty. He acknowledges, in his letter to the king*, that his appointments were not under 3000*l.* a year, but reproaches William with not having added to them. He also sympathises with the neglected condition of the collaterals of his family, complaining grievously of his "sister being left without one pension," and of his brother, a lieutenant-colonel of horse, being "forced to quit the service, and seek a *subsistence by marrying an old widow.*" Alas, poor Colonel! The admiral, however, was not one of the most acquisitive of the revolutionists, and had been a consistent liberal in politics, whether as suitor to the present or late king.

The selfish and double practices of the politicians who environed William doubtless gave a tone to his public administration. Finding himself among partisans he could not satisfy or comprehend, who by secret conspiracy sought to pull down the idol they had openly set up, his constitutional reserve and caution deepened into mistrust and dissimulation. In lieu of English he sought Dutch counsels and favourites, the society and advice of Portland, Athlone, Zuylestein, D'Auverquerque, under whom the policy of England became subservient to the policy of the United Provinces. The connexion was invaluable to the States, the resources of a powerful kingdom essentially aiding them in the formidable struggle

* Dated May 10. 1691. — *Dalrymple Papers.*

they had to maintain against a restless and encroaching neighbour.*

But the preferences of William did not always rise to the dignity of a political motive. They partook more of the character of favouritism, in which honours were bestowed less for high merits or services than personal predilections. It was a revival of former royal propensities, in which princes had their minion, and lesser personages their humourist, to soothe or divert their leisure. Neither Portland nor Albemarle had any claim to the distinction of statesmen or of able generalship. Both had been pages to the Prince of Orange, and from that humble condition rose into favour by dint of personal attentions. Keppel supplanted Bentinck in royal favour, and was indebted for success to an intrigue of Sunderland and the king's mistress (Mrs. Villiers, afterwards Countess of Orkney), who forwarded the suit of the new aspirant, to lessen, if possible, Portland's court influence.† The fashion of setting one favourite against another, like the pawns of a chess board, was a common scheme of court favour under the first Stuarts, and seems not to have become obsolete after the Revolution.

The progress of Keppel in the king's affections was

* The advantages of such an alliance, however, had previously failed to induce the States to enter into a closer compact with England. Identified in religion and republican freedom, the design had been cherished by some members of the Long Parliament, of consolidating the two commonwealths of England and Holland under one dominion; so that they might be better able to contend with the great Catholic monarchies of France and Spain, who alike hated them both on the score of Protestantism and liberty. But the wary Dutch declined a more intimate relationship, apprehensive of being absorbed in the embrace of the elder brother.—*Guizot's Causes of the English Revolution*.

† *Memoirs of the Court of England*, vol. i. p. 234.

rapid beyond the expectation of his libertine patrons ; and of the rival favourites he seems to have been the least offensive. He was not cold and dry, like Portland and his master, but amiable and civil to every one, and had some merit as a soldier. Upon both the choicest gifts of the king in honours, crown lands, royal buildings, and forfeitures, were lavished. Portland became the richest subject in Europe ; and his devotion to the prince had certainly established strong claims on the royal bounty.* The grants to Keppel in estates, offices, and honours, were hardly less exuberant. His elevation to the earldom of Albemarle in Normandy was a proud title, it having been selected by the Plantagenets to grace their own line. The lady patroness was not neglected. Mrs. Villiers was the only Englishwoman for whom the king had shown a preference, the queen excepted. The largesses the king conferred upon her immediately after his accession, consisted of the entire private estates of King James in Ireland, valued at 25,000*l.* a year, made subject, however, by William to rent-charges of 1000*l.* and 2000*l.*, payable to two of the late king's mistresses.† This extravagant grant was revoked by parliament, together with other grants of Irish

* When the Prince of Orange was attacked by the small-pox, his physicians recommended that a youth, if possible, should be found to lie nightly with him, to quicken the disease into stronger relief : young Bentinck, from attachment to his master, had the courage to undertake the perilous office.

† This settlement was curious, if what Mr. Jesse states (*Memoirs of the Stuarts*, vol. iv. p. 478.) is authentic ; namely, that William III. did not remit to the queen-dowager of James II. the 5000*l.* a year granted by parliament, but put the money into his own pocket. Such a preference of the concubines to the wife was doubtless questionable morality in this paragon prince and idol of a party, and fully matches the worst peculations of Marlborough under Queen Anne.

forfeitures, amounting to upwards of a million of acres, allotted to the favourites and the Lords Romney and Athlone.

The manners of the king did not help to render less unpalatable to the English these prodigal alienations to his Dutch favourites. He was reserved, arid, and caustic in ordinary intercourse. His confidence was difficult to win, and he was very susceptible of adverse impressions, especially towards those of acknowledged ability. Cold by temperament, he had few soft emotions, either as husband, relative, or friend. Music, literature, and the fine arts had no charms for him. His education had been narrow; limited to mathematics, military engineering, and modern languages. It was certainly the education of a soldier, but not that of a monarch, who had other functions beside the conduct of an army.

Making allowance for these drawbacks, it is impossible to help ranking this prince among the illustrious names of history. The vices of his character and demeanour were private; his virtues were of a high public order. He was cautious and firm in the pursuit of great undertakings; in battle he was heroic. No inequality of force made him quail, and in adverse or prosperous fortune he preserved his equanimity. He was the earliest champion of constitutionalism; two nations owed their liberties to him, and he zealously contended for the maintenance of the nationalities of Europe. His love of toleration is beyond praise. His own Calvinism did not endear him to the Church of England; but in Holland he had witnessed all sects and denominations living together in amity, and he ardently sought to introduce a like religious peace among his new subjects.

After the sovereign, the characteristic elucidations afforded by parliament under the Revolution govern-

ment may be briefly indicated. Its greatest work was that already dwelt upon, in the settlement of the constitution, the Protestant succession, and in abridging the term of its own duration. It also rendered secondary services of some value, by incorporating the Bank of England and East India Company, and making a permanent provision for the support of Greenwich Hospital. A salutary mitigation of the treason laws was enacted, by allowing the accused to have a copy of the indictment and of the panel, counsel to be assigned him, and two witnesses made necessary to convict. Legislation was more severe against property offences, making it felony to steal to the value of five shillings from a dwelling house, and offering rewards for the apprehension of highwaymen, and exempting from parish offices the prosecutors of felons. But it had the negative merit of suffering to expire, without renewal, the censorship of the press, and the meetings of convocation.

In two directions the legislature of the period, if judged by present lights, claims no praise. The first was in the severe laws framed against Catholics, and for which their general hostility against the government alone offers any extenuation. As a very different spirit has since supervened, it is not worth while preserving the memory of the disqualifying statutes of this period by a specification of them. Their general purport, especially in Ireland, was to deprive papists of their civil rights in respect of property, inheritance, and the education of their children; in short, to make them aliens in their own country, and, if possible, expel them from it.

But probably the most disparaging exemplification of the liberality and science of parliament was in the laws framed for the regulation of the Corn Trade. At an early period the exportation of corn was entirely pro-

hibited, from the natural but mistaken notion that this was the best means by which uniform plenty could be secured at home. This policy continued with little relaxation till the accession of the Stuarts, when exportation began to be allowed on the payment of a duty. But in the first year after the Revolution, parliament rushed to the opposite extreme; restrictions were imposed on importation, and a bounty of 5s. allowed on every quarter of wheat exported so long as the home price did not exceed 48s. The bounty, under the pretext of encouraging husbandry, continued to be paid without diminution till the year 1773, and was not entirely abandoned till 1815. During the early portion of this period, either from the temptation of the premium on exportation, or the produce of the country outgrowing the home consumption, large quantities of corn were annually exported. From 1697 to 1773 the sums paid in bounty had amounted to 6,237,176*l.* The result obtained by the double error in commercial economy of a bounty on exports and restrictions on imports, was considered an undeniable proof of national prosperity. But it was unjust, if not fallacious; a prosperity only for the landlord legislators, if for them, and the reverse to the rest of the community.

The character of the seasons during all the latter portion of King William's government must have interrupted the operation of the bounty system. A rainy autumn in 1694 destroyed such a quantity of corn that wheat sold in London at 67*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. The dearth continued seven years, owing to a succession of cold and wet seasons, and extended to most parts of Europe, especially Scotland, where many died of famine. From this cause, and the pressure of the war, the condition of the country in this reign was the reverse of progressive, it was declining; and this declension was

evidenced, not only by the decay of population, but of trade, as was shown by the decrease in mercantile shipping, in the customs, and post-office duties.

The war had other disastrous issues, in introducing a reckless squandering and corruption into all departments of the government, and into parliament itself. Even the payment of the military was deferred, if not accelerated by a bribe. It was proved that the secretary of the Treasury had taken 200 guineas for expediting the payment of arrears due to a regiment, and that Sir John Trevor, speaker of the Commons, had accepted 1000 guineas for passing through the House the Orphans' Bill. The last was a job of the city of London, to enable it to meet the expenses incurred in the erection of Bethlehem Hospital, the Monument, and other works. One discovery led to another ; and it was found from the books of the East India Company, that great sums had been disbursed for secret services in parliament, rendered to that body in a life and death struggle with a rival association. A Bill of Pains and Penalties was introduced and carried in the Commons to compel disclosures ; it was vehemently opposed in the Lords by the Duke of Leeds (Danby), Lord President of the Council, who spoke like an incorruptible patriot, but against whom subsequent discoveries established strong grounds of corrupt participation. The timely absconding of an agent of the duke caused a failure of direct proof ; and so many on all sides were implicated, that by common consent the inquiry was suffered to drop.

One of the most distinctive and progressive elements of this period was the rise of the Monied Interest, consisting of a class of capitalists who did not employ their wealth in the hive of labour, or in the production or sale of commodities, but in assisting and facilitating

others in these operations. It was an efflorescence of commercial prosperity, and the commencement of an active monetary apparatus. As the business of banking is carried on by unemployed capital, it evidences a surplus of riches, and is coeval with the practice of lending on security to individuals or the government; but it hardly became a distinct occupation prior to William III. At first the Royal Mint was used by merchants as a place of deposit for the safe custody of cash; but Charles I., in 1640, seizing the money, under the pretext of a loan to aid the war against the Scots, the Mint lost its credit. About 1645 the goldsmiths were employed to receive and pay cash, and gradually assumed the regular functions of bankers, by discounting bills and making advances, and receiving the rents remitted to town by country gentlemen. They allowed interest on deposits, however short the period, and became a great mercantile convenience in pecuniary transactions. The dash up the Thames by the Dutch in 1672, and burning of the ships at Chatham, caused a run upon them, which impaired their credit; but it was only by a second inroad of royal spoliation that they were utterly ruined. The goldsmiths were wont to make advances to government on the credit of the supplies voted by parliament, and were repaid principal and interest, as the parliamentary grants reached the Exchequer. But in 1672 Charles II., under the promptings of his own evil nature, or that of his ministers, closed the Treasury and appropriated the supplies to his own uses. By this act of violence, the goldsmiths were disabled from meeting the demands of their customers, their credit annihilated, and many thousands of families who had trusted them, ruined. The injury thus inflicted was never more than partly compensated, by charging

the excise with interest; but the principal was never repaid.

From this period banking became a separate business, owing to recent experience, probably a cautiously trusted and not extensive one. No successful attempt appears to have been made to establish a joint-stock or incorporated bank until the commencement of the Bank of England. This was in 1694, and in the following year the National Bank of Scotland was established. They were founded on the model of the great banks of Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. The English bank was chartered for the twofold purpose of assisting individuals and the government, and the advantageous bargain it made attests the great need of its services. For a loan of 1,200,000*l.* to government, it stipulated to be paid 8 per cent. interest, and receive 4000*l.* a year for the expenses of management. The Bank was not allowed to trade, but required to restrict its transactions to dealings in bullion and bills of exchange, to making advances on the security of goods, which pledges, if not redeemed within the time specified, might be sold by auction. Owing less to a deficiency of wealth than of currency, the Bank afforded extensive aid to private credit, and was very useful to the government, especially in the great recoinage of silver in this reign.

The age had become decidedly fiscal and commercial in its attributes. Its chief men of letters, like Sir William Petty, Gregory King, and Davenant, were investigators of questions of population, prices, public revenue, and other economical and statistical problems. The principal writers who shone in more elegant, serious, or imaginative literature were, Sir William Temple, Cudworth the metaphysician, Tillotson, Baxter, Bunyan, Dryden, and Otway.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

Ascendancy of the Churchills. — War of the Succession. — Splendid but resultless Victories of the Duke of Marlborough. — Exhausting Effects of the War on the Belligerents. — Decline of the War Party. — Harley's Plot against the Favourites. — Dismissal of the Marlboroughs from the Queen's Service. — Peace of Utrecht. — Rivalries of Harley and Bolingbroke; St. John's successful Intrigues. — Death of the Queen. — Shortlived Triumph of Bolingbroke, and Accession of the Hanover Family. — Intellectual Age of Anne. — Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton. — John Locke and Sir Dudley North. — The Essayists. — Wren's and Vanbrugh's Advancement of Architecture. — Defect of St. Paul's Cathedral.

EXPERIENCE may be reckoned among the elements of national progress, for it may be inferred that nations, not less than individuals, will seek to profit by the examples of the past. In this respect the brief but pregnant reign of Queen Anne is instructive, from the diversified lessons it affords of the evolutions of human nature, both in its private and public capacities. It was a period which brought into striking relief some of the chief phases of political life, in the prominence of brilliant if not momentous events, in the characteristics of female government, in the rise and fall of favourites, in the selfish conflict of factions. The principal personage, ostensibly, in the performance, however, derives interest, as is not unusual in dramatic representations, from regal position rather than eminent qualities, or the direct influence she exercised over the varied movements of which she was passively the central figure.

When Marlborough, in the courts of the continent, represented Queen Anne as “a good sort of woman,” he in fit words aptly set forth her true character. She would have formed a good citizen’s wife, but had no gifts for a throne, unless it was her personal demeanour, which was eminently dignified and gracious. Her virtues were of the domestic order, affectionate and prone to indulge the sympathies of the heart, in the endearments of connubial life, and the relations of family and friendship; but to govern a kingdom transcended her powers, and became an irksome oppression. Notwithstanding, her faculties were naturally of an average quality, but had not been sedulously cultivated, and her notions of government, like those of her family, were narrow and despotic. She preferred the Tories to the Whigs, and was warmly attached to the church, with little tolerance for dissenters. Conscious of intellectual incompetence, the queen had the usual infirmity of persons mistrustful of themselves, in being jealous of the aids she needed, and the appearance of being controlled by them.

The persons under whose guidance the queen began her reign, were the Churchills, especially the Duchess of Marlborough, who, as Miss Sarah Jennings, had obtained an unbounded influence over her while Princess Anne. So intimate did they become in companionship, that differences of rank were ignored, and at the desire of the princess they assumed feigned names; Anne adopted that of Mrs. *Morley*, and Lady Churchill that of Mrs. *Freeman*, as most suited to the frankness of her nature. It doubtless made intercourse free and easy to both parties, for the maintenance of etiquette is hardly less irksome than its observance; but it was a levelling down pregnant with perils, and, from the characters of the fond pair, that which happened might have been foreseen. Anne was

indolent and unambitious, more under the influence of the heart than the head. Her favourite was the reverse. Consequently the queen's enthronement became more the enthronement of the Marlboroughs than herself. The ascendancy of the duke might have been tolerated, his abilities being unrivalled, and the juncture demanded them ; but equal claims could not be urged for his partner. Her temper was violent, haughty, and refractory ; and the indiscretion of the duchess finally issued in the overthrow of her lord, his ministry, and the Grand Alliance.

The War of the Succession was a bequest of the preceding reign, occupied ten years out of the twelve of the queen's government, and laid waste some of the finest countries of Europe. The point at issue between France and the Confederates was, whether a grandson of Louis XIV., or the second son of the Emperor of Germany, should succeed to the crown of Spain. England exerted her utmost force in this contest both in men and money, though it was nearly indifferent to her interests whether Austria or France was aggrandised by the acquisition of Spain and her American possessions. At the outset a difference prevailed in council on the best mode of conducting the war — whether by land or sea : the Earl of Rochester, the queen's maternal uncle, and head of the Tory party, was in favour of a naval war ; but the interest of the Marlboroughs, seconded by that of their devoted supporter, the Lord Treasurer Godolphin, prevailed, and a vigorous campaign on the continent was determined upon. It favoured all the aspirations of the Churchills, made them supreme in state affairs in England and abroad, and opened for the duke a wide field of honours, emolument, and martial glory.

In England most wars have been popular at the beginning, and the reverse towards the close. It was so with

the Succession war; the passions of the people were excited by the protection afforded to the Stuarts by the French king, his refusal to acknowledge the Protestant settlement in the Hanover family, and inflammatory representations of his restless ambition. But the splendid victories of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, unequalled since the days of Crecy and Agincourt, did not compensate for the decay of trade and the rapid increase of the public debt and taxes, more especially as their greatest achievements had seldom a more decisive result than the capture of a fortress or a military inroad; for it may be observed of these celebrated generals, that they knew better how to win battles than to conquer kingdoms. The nation became clamorous for peace; and its wishes being seconded by a new ministry, whose measures, either from public or factious considerations, were different from those of their predecessors, that of Utrecht was hastily concluded.

The war had been strenuously supported by the Whigs; and as the Treaty of Utrecht was concluded by the Tories, its policy has been sharply contested by the partisans of the rival parties. In concluding a separate peace with the common enemy, England seemed open to the charge of treachery to her allies; but many circumstances could be alleged in extenuation of her secession from the league, in the failure of the allies to perform their part of the compact, and the altered condition of the belligerents. France was humbled by her reverses abroad and exhaustion at home, and had ceased to be dangerous; moreover, the Spanish people had clearly manifested their preference of a French over an Austrian prince; lastly, England had no longer any interest in the war: Louis acknowledged the Protestant settlement; and though Philip was left master of Spain, both he

and his grandfather were ready to afford guarantees against its junction under one crowned head with France, and this contingency constituted the great danger sought to be averted by the Grand Alliance. Weighed by these considerations, the peace appears to have been an allowable compromise. War may be rashly entered upon ; but peace can hardly ever be too precipitately concluded.

Hostilities had been carried on with great fierceness without any substantial gain by any of the belligerents. The last great battle fought in the war, that of Malplaquet, had been fraught with fearful recollections. In valour, science, and conduct, the combatants had been equal ; but the results of the “murderous conflict,” as Marlborough termed it, bore no proportion to its magnitude, and in looking over the bloody field, the duke himself sickened at the useless waste of life. The loss of the allies amounted to 20,000 in killed and wounded. Owing to the strength of their position, the French suffered less, though beaten and forced to retire. In England there was no exultation over so equivocal a triumph, especially when it was found that the paltry town of Mons would be the only prize of so costly a sacrifice. The battle, however, had one salutary issue, in giving rise to a more fixed desire for peace on both sides, from the hopelessness of entire mastery by either. France, though repeatedly beaten, appeared exhaustless in resources, and was ready, after every reverse, to renew the conflict with unabated spirit. All therefore became convinced of the futile character of the war, and the desirableness of terminating the uncompensated slaughter of brave men, and the waste of resources by every European state.

France obtained the main object of her ambition, by seating a Bourbon on the Spanish throne ; but it was purchased at an enormous price. In the chief elements

of material greatness, the kingdom at the commencement of the reign of Louis XIV. was equal, in many respects superior, to this country. In commerce, manufactures, and naval power she was equal, in public revenue vastly superior ; and her population was twofold that of England. But towards the close of the restless career of her sovereign, she was quite exhausted, and only saved from utter ruin by the peace of Utrecht. Her revenue had greatly declined during the war ; her currency was depreciated thirty per cent. ; the choicest of her people had been forcibly carried away to recruit her discomfited armies ; while her merchants and industrious citizens were crushed to the earth by heavy imposts, aggravated in pressure by the exemption of the nobility and clergy from taxation. France never recovered under the Bourbons the terrible ills entailed on her population by im-politic wars, and which finally issued in the destruction of the monarchy.

Her principal antagonist suffered in an equal proportion, but less irreparably, because England was less deeply involved in hostilities, had fewer enemies to combat, and more insulated from the scene of warfare. But the accession of the Prince of Orange forms a remarkable era in the history of the condition of the people, and is a forcible illustration of the calamities that may be inflicted by a wrong political administration. The ambition of William III. and of the government of Queen Anne, under the alleged pretext of checking French aggrandisement, was to be the umpire in European quarrels, to settle the succession to thrones, and to be the champion of Protestantism. Hence the evils resulting from their meddling interventions. During the twenty-five years of their reign the country enjoyed only five years of peace. The consequences of unceasing

hostilities were an enormous increase of taxes and debt, impoverishing to the existing, and irredeemable by a future, generation. The tide of prosperity, which had flowed steadily onwards for two centuries, was arrested at the Revolution of 1688. Unequivocal symptoms began to appear of national decay, in the decline of population, in the diminished export of commodities, in the paralysis of internal industry and enterprise, and in the absence of signs of advancement which had formed, as successively remarked in previous pages, prominent features in the domestic history of the country from the accession of the Tudors.

The return of peace gave the finishing stroke to that ascendancy of the Churchills with which the queen's reign commenced. Their domination had been as complete in England as that which the French king was said to aspire to in the affairs of Europe. The ambition of Louis XIV. was frustrated, and the absolute sway of the Marlboroughs overthrown by a confederacy. The secret influence and the successful management by which their ascendancy was destroyed, are only relevant in this place from the light they cast on the character of the elements which at this period directed the political affairs of the kingdom.

If Swift is to be believed, the autocracy of the Duchess of Marlborough had begun to lose something of its absoluteness on the queen's accession. Indeed the character of the favourite was not suited to prolonged dominion. To the usurpation of the functions of the sovereign, she added arrogance in the exercise of them. Unlike minions in general, the mistress of the robes was not oily and insinuating, but passionate, dictatorial, and contumacious. In performing her offices of duty, such as holding the queen's gloves, the duchess did it with a contemptuous

air. Upon the occasion of an altercation between them relative to the duke, the haughty "viceroy," as she was termed, abruptly commanded her majesty to be silent, lest they should be overheard; indignities these which the queen might endure owing to the familiarity she had incautiously admitted, but was not likely to forgive. The wife of Marlborough evidently could not bear, any more than superior minds, the license of unbridled power; and her tyranny gave way, as tyrannies are apt to do, from the combined resistance it provoked.

In the height of prosperity the Marlboroughs reaped a splendid harvest, 100,000*l.* being the estimated amount of their annual gains in offices, gifts, and emoluments. Naturally affectionate, the queen could not bear a vacant heart; and somebody or something must fill it. The needful substitute was not long or far to seek. Sarah's despotic sway had become far too enviable or offensive not to make many watchful to share in or reduce it by opening the queen's eyes, had not Anne herself become sensible of her degradation; but that which most embittered the fall of the royal governess was the discovery that the new favourite was a creature of her own making and introduction into the world.* Mrs. Masham, or Abigail Hill, as first known at court, was a humble retainer and distant relative, whom the duchess had taken up out of charity. Her father had been a Turkey merchant, but failed, and left a large family destitute. In their obscurity the Marlboroughs had lost sight of them; but apprised of their forlorn state, the duchess resolutely set herself to assist them. For Abigail she got the appointment of rocker in the nursery, her younger sister being

* Coxe's Memoirs of Marlborough, vol. ii. p. 94. Bohn's edition, with notes by the author.

made laundress; and for their brothers the duke made room in the army, making the eldest his aide-de-camp, though he declared he was “good for nothing.” Attached by such affinities, the Churchills could hardly expect treason in their own camp. But their ascendancy was undermined by a widespread treachery—by the ingrates whom they had cherished and brought out. Harley and St. John, with the other chiefs of the faction that supplanted the duke and reversed his policy, had been his fulsome adulators, and owed to him their first helps to fame and power.

Mrs. Masham had advantages which, though apparently against her, were favourable to her mission. Considered to be too lowly in office and pretensions, she made substantial progress before she was suspected. The duchess could hardly imagine the humble dependant she had so warmly patronised would try to supplant her, though it was exactly the turn Madame Maintenon served her predecessor, Montespan, in the favour of Louis XIV., and which Bolingbroke rendered in the issue to his early friend Harley.

Impatient of the restraint of constant attendance the duchess sought to lighten her official duties by placing a confidential friend near the queen’s person; and for a time her relative answered all her expectations, being a faithful and vigilant observer of court transactions. She therefore relaxed still further in her duties, and, proud of her husband’s great services, became more remiss and domineering. Abigail was not unobservant of these manifestations, nor of the violent altercations that had commenced and were of constant occurrence between the queen and the favourite. By the confidential complaints which frequently burst from her majesty Mrs. Hill found herself growing in confidence, which the candidates for

court favour were not slow to perceive, and gradually she aspired to a higher degree of consideration. Besides that suppleness of temper natural to dependants seeking advancement, which formed such a contrast to the dictatorship of the duchess, the political principles of Mrs. Hill, of high church and dislike to the Hanover family, were in unison with those of the queen. Such congeniality in sentiment, joined to the most flattering humility and watchful attention to the royal wishes, enabled her to make a rapid progress in Anne's affections.

Her advances were seconded by Secretary Harley, to whom she was related in the same distant degree as to the duchess, and of whom Harley was also a distant relative. It was this relationship that first introduced him to Marlborough, to whose interest he had been mainly indebted for the Speakership of the House of Commons, over which he exercised great influence by his talent for business, conciliatory manners, and dexterity in debate. Unlike his patron, Harley was not covetous; in other respects a *Joseph Surface*, well calculated to win his way through the crooked paths of political intrigue. He had hitherto figured as a Whig or Tory, as suited his interests, and, under the guise of moderation, had gradually attached to himself a considerable body of adherents, to whom his parliamentary abilities gave strength and unity. To great plausibility and adroitness in flattery, he added quick discernment of character, a calculating head, profound dissimulation, and an exterior of courtesy and candour that deceived the most wary. The duke, open and unsuspecting, was so won by these qualities, that when Harley was accused of duplicity he became pledge for his sincerity, and advised Godolphin to employ his influence with the queen. Knowing the Tory partialities of Anne, her growing dislike of the duchess, and her

anxiety, for peace, to free herself from Whig thraldom, the secretary skilfully formed an attack against the chiefs of the ministry. By his own official access to the court, and still more through the channel of Mrs. Hill, he found means to inflame the queen's indignation against the duchess, to work on her high prerogative notions, and to represent the treasurer and the general as favouring the design of the Whigs, by the monopoly of offices, to reduce her to a state of dependence unworthy of a sovereign. At the same time the artful secretary fomented the discontent of the Whigs against Godolphin and the duke, by insinuating that the two ministers were lukewarm in their cause, and the only obstacle to their advances in power.

Plotters naturally disguise their designs from those most affected by them, and who are, of course, the last to suspect or discover them. This was exemplified in Harley's intrigues. None of the *Triumvirs* suspected the pit he was digging for them. For a long time the duchess refused to listen to the friendly warnings of Maynwaring on the rising influence of Mrs. Hill, but expressed her joy at the relief she had given her, and was convinced no danger could arise from the machinations of her relative. At length the evident favour of Harley and Hill with the queen dissipated the impression, and she communicated her apprehensions to Godolphin and the duke. It is surprising that the cabal had escaped the matured sagacity of the lord treasurer, and still more that of Marlborough, who was acquainted with the intrigues of all the courts of Europe except his own, in which he was most interested. It is still more extraordinary that, after being informed of the predominance of the new favourite, the duke should think that her progress could be checked by a re-

monstrance of the duchess. It was against the duchess the plot was mainly directed ; and when she remonstrated, the queen only replied with a cajoling epistle, in which sarcasm was mixed with affected humility, and deprecating harsh construction against her “ever-faithful Morley’s actions.”

If the duchess could have penetrated hearts, she would have found that her fall was already sealed. That which the new advisers laboured unceasingly to impress on the queen was that she was in “leading strings,” and that she ought to “go alone ;” which disparaging intimation naturally sank deep into a mind diffident of its powers. But though the sway of the duchess was doomed, it was determined to lighten the oppression of the viceroy by degrees, and not to rouse her ire, and thereby frustrate ulterior schemes by too abrupt a demonstration.

The first unmistakeable sign of the servile rebellion was the secret marriage of the new favourite with Mr. Masham, whom the duchess had likewise introduced into the royal household. No reason has been assigned for the concealment of Mrs. Hill’s marriage, except that her husband was a relative of Harley. But to solemnise it without consulting the duchess evinced that Mrs. Masham had not only renounced her vassalage, but had acquired the highest confidence in royal favour. The next adverse stroke was levelled at the duke, by giving a regiment, without consulting him, to Mrs. Masham’s brother. Afterwards the queen evinced her independence by the creation of Tory bishops without consulting her usual advisers. These slights so wrought upon the duke, that he abruptly left London with the duchess, and a fixed resolve to resign unless Mrs. Masham was removed. He communicated his resolution to the queen, and had ~~he~~ adhered to it, all would have been well ; for so long as

she continued at court the confidential agent of Harley with the queen, she would always find means to give effect to his subtle contrivances for the embarrassment of ministers. But the duke yielded the main point, and accepted a compromise. In lieu of a regiment, a pension was given to the favourite's brother ; and after this concession by the queen, the Lord President Somers urged upon Marlborough that it would be ungracious, if not unconstitutional, in him to insist upon the dismissal of the queen's bedchamber woman.

The duke's services were indispensable to the new aspirants to power until peace could be concluded ; but his subsequent career was a series of mortifications. The first and most fatal was the dismissal of the duchess, after twenty-seven years of royal service. This would have appeared ungrateful, had it not been palliated, if not justified, by circumstances. The Marlboroughs had absorbed the majesty of the throne, and for their own honour or gain exercised directly, or through relatives and dependents, all its prerogatives. Intoxicated by success, this engrossing family had become arrogant and tyrannical. The basis of their ascendancy was the queen's idolatry of them, and the first step to emancipation was to raise up a new idol, which was effected by the seduction of a rebel vassal of the Churchill confederacy. After this acquisition ulterior proceedings became easy ; and the steadiness with which the queen lent herself to the successive blows intended to humiliate an oppressive usurpation, evinced the deep sense to which she had been awakened of her past thraldom.

The duchess was the trump-card of her partner, and he made a desperate effort to avert her removal. He obtained an audience of the queen, and besought her, in the most touching terms, not to renounce the duchess till

she had no more need of his services. Anne observed that her honour was concerned in the removal of the duchess, and insisted that the official key should be delivered within three days. On this the duke threw himself on his knees, and earnestly entreated for an interval of ten days; but obtained no other answer than a repetition of the demand, limiting the term to two days. Finding Anne inexorable the duke rose, and adverted to other topics; but her majesty abruptly interrupted him, exclaiming, “I will talk of no other business till I have the key!” Upon this the duke indignantly withdrew; and, finding the game up, the Marlboroughs assumed, in turn, an air of offended dignity, by delivering up the key the same night.

Despite of this humiliating repulse the duke did not redeem his pledge of resigning. Overcome by the persuasions of his friends, his own love of power, or baser motives, he clung to office till he was fairly kicked out. For this last mortification, a charge of peculation, in the most material parts false, was preferred against him by the new ministry. It reduced the hero to the dead lion, whom any one might insult with impunity. On the same or following day he appeared at court; but, as Swift informed Stella, “none spoke to him.” That the queen might enjoy the full gratification of her victory, she was induced to appear at a cabinet council, and order an entry in the books “that the duke had been dismissed from all his employments.” The next day she communicated this minute in a note in her own hand, which, Coxe says, is not extant, because the duke, in a transport of rage, threw it into the fire.

The remainder of Marlborough’s life was a series of vexations. Glory he had won; but the pecuniary taint made men begrudge him its accustomed rewards. In the

House of Lords he was exposed to the cruel aspersion that he had, in reckless enterprises, sacrificed the lives of his officers, to fill his pockets by the sale of their commissions. The press was bitterly hostile to him; both he and Godolphin had too much neglected to *tune* the crowd of writers who had begun to give a new impulse to the public sentiment. The consequence was a rapid increase of that prejudice which had been excited against the general, and a contempt of those victories which had before been hailed with universal enthusiasm. His return from his Gallic campaigns ceased to be hailed by the popular cry of "God bless the Duke!" "No wooden shoes!" "No Popery!" Instances were everywhere repeated of his fraud, avarice, and extortion; of his insolence, ambition, and misconduct. Even his courage was called in question; and this consummate leader was represented as the lowest of mankind. From this storm of libels he sought refuge on the continent. But he never recovered ascendancy or respect. Frequent attacks of paralysis, aggravated by domestic bereavements from the premature deaths of his daughters, made up the sequel of a history that had been gallant and chivalrous in the commencement, splendid in its meridian glory, but futile, perplexed, and unhonoured in its conclusion.

The sequel of the political intriguers who triumphed over the chief who in war never knew a defeat, is instructive. Examples are constantly occurring in human affairs, of men not only being the instruments of evil, but of its punishment. Napoleon's life is an example of these twofold missions, first effectually subduing the anarchy of France, and next replacing it with a hardly less revolting military domination. In like manner Harley and St. John rendered useful services in Queen Anne's reign, but per-

verted their success to unworthy purposes. By supplanting one royal favourite by another, the country was rescued from an objectless and exhausting war, the queen from a degrading infatuation, and the ascendancy acquired by a rapacious clique over a generous princess abated. But here their utilities ended. As conquerors are wont, they quarrelled over the spoils of victory. Like the Girondists and the Jacobins in the overthrow of the French monarchy, or more aptly Robespierre and Danton in the destruction of the Hebertists, they had no sooner overwhelmed the common enemy in the Marlboroughs, than they became jealous of each other, and bitter competitors for the displaced monopoly. Secretary St. John had insinuated himself into the confidence of Lady Masham, whom Oxford had offended by the refusal of a pension, and sought to convert the former confederate of his rival and early patron into an instrument of his disgrace. The queen inclined to the more bold and plausible councils of St. John, especially as the supple secretary had not scrupled to join in her aversion to the Hanover family, and preference of her half-brother the Pretender. For a moment Bolingbroke appeared to have scaled the height of his ambition, by the fall of his opponent. But the sudden death of the queen made his triumph short-lived; and frustrated, by the promptitude of the Whigs in consummating the Protestant settlement, all his wiles, either for the restoration of the Stuarts, or the perpetuation of his power under the electoral dynasty.

Queen Elizabeth had her favourites like Anne, but too much strength of character to become their tools. Moreover, she was more fortunate in those around her, in a host of gallant men to command her fleets and armies, and in a firm, honest, and enlightened statesman to direct

her counsels. Queen Anne was less happy. Godolphin, who served her longest as minister, could hardly pretend to this description unless it was in disinterestedness ; the rest were mostly parasites or adventurers, bent on selfish ends, through the infirmities of her character. Their broils hastened her majesty's death. Oxford and Bolingbroke had become so exasperated against each other, that they could not refrain from the most violent altercations in the queen's presence. After an indecorous scene of this kind, the queen's feelings were so excited that she declared she should never survive it. Her presentiment was just ; for two days after she sunk into a stupor from which she only recovered sufficiently to signify her approval of the nomination of Shrewsbury, by the council, to the vacant treasurership. After this effort she expired.

The most striking illustration afforded by this short reign is in the influence trifles may exercise over great affairs. Although the preferences and dislikes of the queen had no other foundation than the predilections of the toilet, it was by them that the policy of her government and the destinies of Europe were determined. By a chambermaid's intrigue Bolingbroke triumphed over his rival, the Earl of Oxford. It was because the queen doated on the Duchess of Marlborough that her reign was signalised by the great victories of Blenheim and Ramillies ; it was because Mrs. Masham supplanted her benefactress in royal favour, that a stop was put to the war which desolated Europe ; it was in great measure owing to the influence of another favourite lady, the Duchess of Somerset, that the queen did not attempt to recall the chevalier St. George.* Thus, probably, a feeble-minded

* Lord John Russell's *Memoirs of Europe*, p. 298. ; Hallam's *Const. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 283.

princess, influenced only by her waiting-women, determined that the Pretender should be excluded from the British throne, a Tory and high church ministry formed, and a Bourbon seated beyond the Pyrenees.

For the part performed by the leading men in these transactions, some extenuation may be found in the character of the chief personage. They “Stooped to Conquer.” If the mean or weak are raised into authority, the artful and ambitious will seek to make them subservient through their vices or infirmities. In the eager struggle for power men often act and speak beneath themselves; hence, apart from their crooked politics, Marlborough, Harley, and St. John are distinguished names; the first must ever rank among the greatest of England’s captains, and the last two hold no ignoble place in the annals of her literature, which they loved, cultivated, and patronised. Unaided by personal worth and intellectual eminence, the reign of Anne could never have attained its unquestioned celebrity abroad or usefulness at home. The great work of a legislative union with Scotland, which since the junction of the two crowns had been steadily aimed at, was completed under her government, chiefly through the exertions of Somers and Godolphin. Lord Halifax also took a leading part in effecting the union, and, like Somers, was an active patron of letters as well as a wit, and an acute observer of the world. Halifax was the first public man to call attention to the state of the national records in the Tower, and it was through him the Cottonian manuscripts were preserved and made accessible to the public. He pleaded strongly for a public library upon the plan of that now possessed in the British Museum. His merits are commemorated by Pope, in a well known quotation.

Intellectual tendencies were not limited to statesmen;

they had become a pervading spirit, and the reign of Anne, or more strictly the period commencing a little earlier and continued a little later, is signalised by the appearance of illustrious names, that form an epoch in the progress of science, literature, and the arts. In natural philosophy, the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton gave a new interpretation of Nature's mysteries. He proved by a beautiful sequence of experiments, that the solar light is not homogeneous, but composed of rays differing in refrangibility, and that by the material absorption of some, or the reflection of others, originated the infinite varieties in the hues and colours of creation. Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler had preceded him by important discoveries in cosmetic Astronomy, but the great Englishman has the exclusive honour of establishing, by a masterly induction, the great law of the gravitating force by which the celestial bodies are sustained, and their movements governed in the regions of space.

The genius of Newton, however, was rather special than universal. In the patient and successful pursuit of the physical laws of the universe he was unrivalled, and he contributed immensely to extend, by a sure demonstrative process, the sphere of knowledge in dynamics, optics, and mathematics. He was not equally fortunate in the culture of moral and theological science; and in chemistry, to which he was much devoted before he left Cambridge, he seems to have fallen into the delusion of the alchemists on the transmutation of metals.* But it does not appear that there was any abatement in his studious ardour after his appointment to the Mint, his continued industry being attested by the vast mass of manuscripts he left, and which were ex-

* Memoirs by Sir David Brewster.

amined by a committee of the Royal Society, but none were thought worth printing except his “Observations on the Apocalypse.” The pains and labour he wasted on chronology and church history are incredible; and on examining his posthumous papers many of them appeared, Dr. Hutton relates, to be “copies over and over again, with little variation; the whole number being upwards of 4000 sheets in folio, or eight reams of foolscap paper, besides the bound books, of which the number of sheets is not mentioned.”*

Subsequent to Newton’s great discoveries, Dr. Bradley made an essential addition to astral science, by the discovery of the aberration of light, or the change in the apparent place of a star from the progressive motion of light and the earth’s annual revolution. Astronomy and mathematics were the favourite studies of the age, and, beside Newton and Bradley, had successful cultivators in Napier, the discoverer of logarithms, and in Dr. Halley, Flamsteed, Hooke, Harriott, and Briggs. Several of these were professors of Gresham College, which, with the Royal Society, essentially aided the advancement of natural science; the former had been founded by Sir Thomas Gresham, the princely merchant of London. Latin continued the language of philosophy; it was the language in which the learned printed their chief works, and in which they corresponded and conversed; though a French traveller (Sorbière) relates that when he visited Oxford he found it, from the peculiarities of pronunciation by the professors there, not a very ready or intelligible medium of communication.

Literature was not less progressive than science, but had experienced many vicissitudes from the Elizabethan

* Mathematical Dictionary.

era. The life and dramatic genius of that stirring period declined under the pedantry and polemics of her successor. It met with still less favour pending the austerities of the Commonwealth, when a rigid strictness of manners was sought to be conjoined with the dogmata of Puritanism. The Restoration inducted an opposite extreme; in place of greater freedom, which might have been wholesome, it brought license, libertinism, and riot, which, with a wit gross and dissolute, became triumphant. The Revolution checked this lawless impulse; and antecedent political controversies reviving, they helped to bring back some of the republican severities in manners and intellectual culture of the Long Parliament. Literature pined rather than advanced after the accession of the Dutch prince; it did not receive any countenance from the court, which had been its chief patron under the Stuarts, while William III. had no sympathy for letters or the arts, not even for music. Still his reign was not unhonoured by distinguished names. The celebrated *Essay* of John Locke on the Human Understanding, extended as widely the fame of England in metaphysics as the discoveries of Newton had done in natural philosophy, and was the first attempt to popularise and to reduce to a system, from Hobbes and preceding writers, the science of mind. It had one drawback in the opening it afforded to the materialism of Berkeley and the scepticism of later writers, Hume especially. It certainly must be conceded to the last that, if the sole inlet of knowledge is through the medium of the senses, its foundation cannot be held to be implicitly reliable, since the senses are known to be often illusive or deceptive in their communications; and the second conclusion of the sceptic is hardly less irresistible, namely, that realities are deprived of all demonstrative existence

if the mind is only cognisant of the impressions, not of the things which these often equivocal messengers convey to it: so that all, in short, is ideal to the intellect. However, the evil of these abstract constructions was redeemed by the admirable teachings of the philosopher on Government, Toleration, and Religious Fanaticism, and which justly rank their author among the early founders of modern Liberalism.

A writer of hardly less originality than Locke, in another sphere of knowledge, was Sir Dudley North, who, in his "Discourses on Trade," advocated those principles of commercial freedom and individual enterprise which form the prominent features of Smith's "Wealth of Nations." Political economy was aided in progress by statistical facts, in which direction Dr. Davenant (the son of Sir William Davenant, the poet) was an useful labourer; and from his collection Gregory King and Sir William Petty framed comprehensive tabular views of the condition of the kingdom at the close of the seventeenth century. Other names of eminence appeared; and Sir William Temple, as an elegant and engaging writer, Burnet as an instructive historian, and Tillotson as a fine preacher, may be mentioned among the intellectual utilities and embellishments of King William's reign.

Under Queen Anne the most novel and delightful distinction was the appearance of the Essayists, Addison, Steele, and Swift, who, in the successive publication of the "Tatler," the "Spectator," and the "Guardian," rendered a priceless service by training the manners, good sense, and amiabilities of society. Steele began the "Tatler," the earliest of these periodicals, but was soon joined by Addison, whose graceful humour, wit, learning, and fertility were so exuberant as to outshine the hardly

inferior accomplishments of his colleague. The “*Tatler*” was started in April, 1707, and continued to January, 1711, at the rate of three papers a week. Of the 271 papers of which it consists, 200 are ascribed to Steele, and only 50 to Addison; most of the residue are attributed to Swift. Of the “*Spectator*,” which has proved the most enduring favourite, Addison had the largest share, four-fifths of the entire seven volumes published belonging to him and Steele. Both these admirable writers were dramatists as well as essayists, and both belonged to the Whig party; but after a half-century of literary fellowship they differed, and parted upon some political question.

Literature, it may be remarked, to be enduring, and of general utility, must be based on the popular demand. If supported only by courtiers, nobles, or ecclesiastics, it is not national, but the literature of a class, and is enslaved by sectarian interests. This freedom of action was obtained under Anne, when the caprice of private patronage, which had been fed by servile dedications, was exchanged for the wider and more independent support of the people. By this emancipation the periodical press became conducive to a more healthy state of the public intellect than the newspapers, limited as they had been to party politics, domestic scandal, or meagre paragraphs of foreign intelligence. They formed the taste and sentiments of society, and were to the middle ranks of the period what cheap weekly publications have subsequently become to the working classes. The Essayists were not remarkable for force, depth, or originality: they were rational, sensible, and courteous writers; and their secondary gifts and commonplace ideas really made their works most apt for their purpose. Executed with laudable intentions, fancy, gaiety, and judgment, they were

better adapted to the early stage of popular development, by creating a literary propensity, than more recondite appeals or perplexing philosophical theories.

The progress of the Arts had been previously checked by the intervention of political troubles, but under Anne Architecture reached a high pitch of grandeur, chiefly from the genius of Sir Christopher Wren, who ranked among the most remarkable intellects of his time, being eminent as a mathematician and astronomer before circumstances determined his devotion to a profession in which his fame is imperishable. The existence of Wren and an apt field for the exercise of his abilities formed a happy coincidence. To him was entrusted the restoration of London after its reduction to ashes by the great fire of 1666. In recovering from this desolating calamity despatch in rebuilding became indispensable ; and so great were the energy and resources of the citizens that in four years 10,000 houses had been erected, and scarcely a sital vacancy remained. But this celerity interfered with the full execution of Wren's scheme of renovation, though doubtless the new metropolis was a great improvement upon the old by the substitution for timber of stone or brick houses, divided by party walls, and not allowed to project story above story, as in old London, till the narrow streets were nearly closed upwards. Despite of precipitation, one noble work was deliberately planned and executed in the rebuilding of St. Paul's, and which would have been a matchless triumph of skill had not the architect yielded to ecclesiastical precedents, and concentrated his artistic powers too exclusively on the embellishment and grandeur of the cupola and West entrance of this magnificent fane to the neglect of its East extremity. I have dwelt on this architectural blemish, on a former occasion, in another

channel of intelligence*, and it may savour of temerity to persist in this objective criticism on the proudest of our national monuments. Still it appears not wholly without foundation. In nature or art, in the climate, in the celestial aspects of the metropolitan cathedral, its sital position and the allocation of inhabitants around it, there seems no cause to warrant the existing disparities of execution. Why, then, should the architect have lavished the resources of his genius in rendering superb the west entrance, and then from that point, on both sides, admitted a progressive declension in beauty and elaborateness till it terminates in the dead and meaningless abutment of the east? Surely if ornaments were august and impressive on the west exterior, they were equally so, and equally needed, on the north, south, and the east. In the erection of a private mansion or street-shop, outhouses with other conveniences may be best thrown into the shade, and the distinction of front and back is allowable; but in a temple that ought to be equally elaborated throughout, a perfect chrysolite in every part, no such fitness of utilities can be pleaded. In extenuation of Wren's failure, if such it be, it ought to be added, that he submitted several designs for the reconstruction of St. Paul's, and that which he preferred was not adopted; and in carrying out the one selected he was much interfered with, especially by the Duke of York, who sought to adapt the new edifice to the Roman worship he purposed to revive.

From laying the first stone to completion, St. Paul's occupied thirty-five years; it was opened for service in 1697, but not finished till 1710. Besides the cathedral, Sir C. Wren saw the completion of fifty-one churches in

* *Spectator*, Dec. 1, 1849.

the city from his designs, the Monument of London, several halls of the city companies, Chelsea Hospital, Marlborough House, and the College of Physicians.

In the erection of noble mansions Sir John Vanbrugh attained celebrity, and of which Blenheim House, Castle Howard, and Seaton Delaval are examples.

In concluding our present summary of progress in art and literature during the reign of Anne, and occasionally in preceding divisional periods, it may be proper to remark that some of the most distinguished leaders of their age have, for an almost obvious reason, been passed over with little more than incidental reference to their names. It would, for instance, have been an idle, if not presumptuous task, to have attempted any new commentary on Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Daniel Defoe, or other similarly established celebrity. These, with the great luminaries of science, Bacon, Hobbes, Newton, and Locke, form, in intellectual culture, creative powers, and advancement, the national gods, with the worship and knowledge of whom almost every one has been made familiar from infancy, and to whose undying renown it would have been hardly possible to add anything not either trite, too curt, or superfluous. Omission, therefore, altogether seemed to me, with some exceptions, preferable to any attempt at an unworthy offering or inadequate appreciation. They are the fixed stars of the firmament of mind and letters, and, like the celestial bodies themselves, continue to shed their rays of glory on the present, as they will probably do on every future generation.

CHAPTER XIX.

REIGN OF GEORGE I.

Accession of the Brunswick Family.—Character of George I.—Triumph of the Whigs, and their vindictive Prosecution of the late Ministry.—Exile of Lord Bolingbroke and his Return to England.—Septennial Act and Peerage Bill.—National Prosperity; Mississippi and South Sea Bubbles.—Court of George I.—Sale of Offices and Dignities by the King's Mistresses.—Dissoluteness of the Continental Courts.—Men of Letters.

BY the watchful energy of the Whigs at the close of the last reign, Protestantism and Constitutionalism were preserved, and the national guarantees secured by the Revolution not suffered to lapse in the transfer of the crown to the electoral House of Hanover. In the parliamentary settlement of the crown, it was the religious element that had prevailed; and George I. succeeded as the nearest Protestant heir of the abdicated family, but with fifty-seven persons of the Stuart blood between him and the throne, with superior hereditary claims. He was the eldest son of Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, by Sophia, the youngest of twelve children of the titular Queen of Bohemia, Elizabeth, only daughter of James I. of England. Of the new king's father little is known save that he was a hardy, stirring man, who expired in 1698; but the king's mother, the Electress Sophia, was eminently endowed, refined in manners, beautiful in person, and well versed in literature and science. She lived to the age of eighty-four, dying in 1714, and at seventy-five was little impaired by age, and is hetn described by

Bishop Burnet as being the “most knowing and entertaining woman of the age.” Her son inherited few of the accomplishments of the electress; he partook more of the qualities of his father, and brought with him the impressions left by his early life in camps and garrisons.

On his accession to the English throne, George I. was in his fifty-fifth year; a good-natured prince, Horace Walpole admits, and wise enough to submit to the constitutional regimen he found established. He left the government of the kingdom to his ministers. He was simple in his tastes as in his personal aspect; German in his habits and attachments, even to that of his mistresses. Hanover he considered his home; in England he was a stranger, neither acquainted with its language, manners, nor constitution; nor did he ever care to become so. Shy and reserved in public, but easy and facetious among his intimates, during the fourteen years of the government of his electoral dominions he had acquired the reputation of a just and circumspect prince, who well understood his own interests and steadily pursued them. Punctual in business, he was more dull than indolent; and the plain honesty of his nature, joined with the narrow notions of a low education, made him look upon his acceptance of the crown as an act of injustice towards his half-cousin the Pretender. He had no taste for literature or the arts; was amorous, fond of punch, and parsimonious. Avarice was so predominant in him that he would raise no troops to secure the succession; and the principal Whigs were obliged from their own purses to advance the sum necessary to gain some ignoble men of rank, whom nothing else would induce to join them.* With these dispositions,

* Lord John Russell's *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe*, vol. i. p. 301.

the king naturally, if not necessarily, became passive in public affairs, beyond a kind of convivial superintendence, exercised with his chief minister over the sovereign's favourite beverage, in the only language common to both.*

Six weeks elapsed between the death of Anne and the arrival in England of her successor. In the interim the government was invested in the Regency, agreeably with the Act of 1705, composed of seven great officers of state, together with nineteen peers named by the elector, most of whom were Whigs. It was this party that had kept open the king's way to the throne, and by them he purposed exclusively to govern, and not by a balanced or unequally mixed administration. During the reign of William III. and the greater part of that of Anne the state offices had been divided between the members of the two parties, with a view to conciliate both and inhibit the leaders from acquiring too absolute control over the sovereign. In the middle of the reign of Anne the Whigs obtained something like exclusive power; and towards the end of her reign the Tories acquired unchecked authority; but their hostile intrigues and misconduct withheld from them the confidence of George I., and the Whigs became strong enough to keep out their opponents for nearly half a century. The Jacobites, or par-

* Horace Walpole says of his father, Sir Robert, that he governed George I. in Latin, the king not speaking English, and his minister no German, nor even French. (*Reminiscences.*) The Tory leader, William Shippen, sarcastically observed, that it "was the only infelicity of his Majesty's reign that he was unacquainted with the English language and the English constitution." This gave great offence to the Court, and "honest" Shippen, as he was termed, refusing to soften the expression, it led to his being sent to the Tower.

tisans of the house of Stuart, were very numerous; but they did not openly avow their designs, and were mostly included among the Tories. Many of the Tories, however, were not from principle opposed to the Hanoverian succession, but only dreaded the accession of that family from an apprehension that their rivals would become dominant, and engross all places of trust and emolument. The strength of the Tories lay among the nobility and gentry, and the populace of London and the large towns. The Whigs depended upon themselves, aided by the Dissenters, the Bank, and the moneyed and commercial interests. Apart from Jacobitism, there was little substantive difference between the two parties. The Tories inclined more inflexibly to the support of High Church, hereditary right, and the royal prerogatives than the Whigs, who held that these elements ought to bend to the changing interests and opinions of the community.

The paramount policy of the Whig ministry was to conciliate the favour of the king by indulging his German predilections, and by frustrating the designs of the disaffected. In the pursuit of the first object the treaty of Hanover was concluded, and the annexation of the duchies of Bremen and Verden to the Electorate secured. England was not interested in either acquisition; they concerned only the electoral states, and entangled the nation in continental alliances. The measures especially directed against the disaffected were the discomfiture of the rash and futile rebellion of the Earl of Mar and disarming of the Highlanders, repeated suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, the passing of the Septennial and Riot Acts, the introduction of the Peerage Bill, and their endeavours at the outset of their power to inflict severe punishment on their Tory predecessors. The main charges against the Tories were founded on the peace of

Utrecht. But as the peace had been sanctioned both by the sovereign and parliament, either previously or subsequently, it is impossible to conceive on what pretext of justice they could be impeached before the tribunal that had concurred in its approval. The particular charge magnified into treason against the principals, Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Ormond, was, that in the negotiation for peace they had endeavoured to procure the city of Tournay for the French king, which was held to be an adhering to the queen's enemies within the statute of Edward III.

Under this violent construction, the heads of the accused were aimed at; and, to escape such retrospective vengeance, Bolingbroke and Ormond withdrew to the continent, but Lord Oxford stood his ground. Before Ormond fled he is said to have taken leave of the latter with a "Farewell Oxford without a head;" to which the other rejoined, "Farewell duke without a duchy." Oxford, however, escaped with a two years' imprisonment, owing to a disagreement between the two Houses; the Duke of Ormond died abroad: as to Bolingbroke, he openly, and in breach of the promise he had given to Lord Stair, the English ambassador, entered the service of the Pretender. In this he did not long continue, either from jealousy of the superior influence of the Duke of Ormond in the Jacobite court, or disgust at the mean qualities of his new master and the follies of his adherents. After an exile of nine years he obtained a qualified pardon for his political offences by means of a bribe of 11,000*l.* given to the Duchess of Kendal, the king's mistress.* At a later period, through the same influence, the family inheritance was restored to him; but Sir Robert Walpole firmly re-

* *Memoirs of the Court of England*, vol. ii. p. 152.

sisted any further concession, and Bolingbroke continued disqualified to take his seat in the House of Lords by the non-reversal of his attainder. It revived the bitter hatred he cherished towards the minister ; and despite of Sir R. Walpole's strong hold of power, it seems not improbable that Bolingbroke, by dint of intrigue and perseverance, might have ultimately triumphed over the favourite servant of the crown, had not the king's death deprived him, in his scheme of hostility, of an essential confederate in the Duchess of Kendal.

Fertile as Bolingbroke was in conspiracies, his present failure precluded all hope of renewing his versatile career of statesmanship. Against the close compact of George II., his Queen Caroline, and Walpole, no opening was left for intrigue. It closed the public career of a remarkable man, who had chiefly erred from impetuosity of judgment. The remainder of Bolingbroke's life of twenty-five years was chiefly spent in retirement, where he was looked up to with oracular veneration ; being visited, Smollett says, "like a *sainted shrine*, by all the distinguished votaries of wit, eloquence, and ambition." He was a fine speaker, of great energy and decision of character, but unscrupulous, and lacked the integrity of principle and singleness of purpose which inspire confidence and lead to unquestioned pre-eminence. Deficient in these sterling qualities, the world has grudgingly awarded him the praise due to his extraordinary gifts, personal and mental, and his name and his works are alike forgotten. His ambition doubtless wanted moral grandeur ; he coveted distinction, but was regardless of its quality : all he aspired to was notoriety and the foremost place, and these he certainly obtained—first as polished gentleman and finished rake, next as courtier, poet*, and politician, and finally as philosopher. In

* Bolingbroke's verses to Clara are respectable, though the subject

politics he seems to have been a liberal Tory, repudiating the extravagances of Legitimacy and High Church ; and it is to be regretted that one so highly accomplished did not win more indisputably for himself the merit he claimed in the epitaph he wrote, namely, that he was the “enemy of no national party, the friend of no faction.”

George I.’s reign was signalised by two constitutional measures of significant import, one of which was carried, the other failed. After the bold stroke of the Revolution it would have been legislative effeminacy to have hesitated in adopting the safeguards essential to the perpetuation of that great settlement. Under this view neither the Septennial Act nor the Peerage Bill appear entirely without extenuation. For a House of Commons that had been elected for three years to add four more to its term of duration, was unquestionably a great stretch of power, since, with equal right, it might have made its sittings for life, or perpetual. Such usurpation of constituent immunities was defended on the score of danger to the government, had a general election ensued amidst the prevailing excitement and disaffection. There was some reason for this apprehension, the clergy, Mr. Hallam * observes, acting a mischievous part in inflaming the Jacobite prejudices of the people in favour of the hereditary right of the Stuarts. But the measure framed for an emergency has been allowed to become a permanent part of the constitution, and defended as an improvement by rendering less frequent the corruption and tumults of a popular

seems to have been otherwise. To Pope’s masterly “Essay on Man” he contributed largely in conversation and writing (eight sheets of the latter, Spence says); but his thoughts and suggestions would receive vast improvement, in point, precision, and brilliancy, under the skilful artisanship of the bard of Twickenham.

* Const. Hist. vol. iii. p. 311.

appeal to the people. These pretexts, however, have lost much of their force since the improvement by the Reform Act under William IV., in the procedure of elections.

The Peerage Bill was much less defensible, and was a party device for perpetuating Whig ascendancy. The ostensible reason given for its introduction was to obviate the inconvenience of sudden augmentations of the peerage, as under Queen Anne, when the Tories at once made twelve new creations. By the provision of the Bill the House of Lords, after a few more additions, was to be limited to the existing number. As respects Scotland, one of the provisions of the Union was to be abrogated, and she was to have twenty-five hereditary, instead of sixteen elective, representatives. It was a seductive device, since the fewer the number of lords the greater the importance of each ; and the tempting project passed the Upper House with little difficulty, but was rejected by the Commons with indignation as an audacious attempt to exclude them and their posterity from the honour of the peerage. That the king should not only concur in, but actually recommend to the adoption of parliament, a scheme depriving him of one of his most valuable prerogatives, attests how passive an instrument he had become in the hands of the executive.

National progress was interrupted during this short reign by many petty but inexpensive wars, successively undertaken with almost every European state, because each in its turn had sheltered the pretender to the throne of England. Owing to these drawbacks commerce declined for several years after the king's accession ; and though it continued to improve again from the year 1718, the exports did not rise to the amount they had attained on the death of Queen Anne. Yet the increased produce of the taxes denoted the enjoyment of a considerable de-

gree of internal prosperity. Money had never before been so abundant. The market rate of interest fell to three per cent. in the interval from 1714 to 1727, while the government seldom borrowed at a higher rate than four.

This monetary abundance, with the excitement produced by a recent example of commercial infatuation in France, seems to have paved the way for a singular extravagance in mercantile speculation in England. It was the famous South Sea Bubble, which began just on the explosion in Paris of its counterpart, the Mississippi scheme of the celebrated John Law. The temptation of the English delusion consisted in very exaggerated representations of the sudden riches to be realised by the opening of new branches of trade in the South Sea. The first propounder of the project was Sir John Blount, who had been bred a scrivener, and was possessed of all the cunning, boldness, and plausibility essential to recommend his speculation to the sanguine, credulous, and designing. He first communicated his plan, under the pretext of paying off the national debt, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, it seems, subsequently became his confederate for a less laudable object.

At first the South Sea stock did not rise according to the expectation of the projector. To remedy this, Blount caused a report to be circulated that Gibraltar and Port Mahon would be exchanged for some places in Peru; by which means the English trade to the South Sea would be protected and enlarged. This rumour, diffused by his emissaries, acted like a contagion. In five days the directors opened their books for a subscription of one million, at the rate of three hundred pounds for every hundred pounds of capital. Persons of all ranks crowded to subscribe in such a manner, that the first subscription

exceeded two millions of original stock. In a few days the stock rose prodigiously, and the subscriptions were sold for double the price of the first payment. Without detailing the various scandalous artifices to enhance the price of stock and decoy the unwary, it is only necessary to observe, that, by the promise of enormous dividends and other infamous arts, the stock was raised to one thousand pounds per centum in price, and the whole nation infected with the spirit of stockjobbing to an astonishing degree. The success of the contrivers originated a great many other bubbles, all of which collapsed, leaving a few artful knaves enriched, and a much greater number of dupes impoverished or ruined. It is the first instance of those speculative extravagances, growing out of an inordinate thirst of gain, of which many subsequent examples ensued now the country had fully entered on its career of commercial activity and enterprise.

Before dismissing the present reign a few additional traits of the king and his court may be illustrative. The favourite monarchal ideal of the Abbé Sieyes was that the sovereign should be sumptuously stall-fed, and relieved of all anxious cares by his ministers. It is a form of rule closely approximated to in the East, in Tibet, Ava, and China, and was not very remotely exemplified in England under George I. The king was in possession of the throne, but avowedly took no interest in the government of the country, its people, their progress or institutions. He seemed, however, sufficiently informed of our past history to cherish a lively sense that disputes with parliament were dangerous, and wisely left the entire management of this body to Sir Robert Walpole. In foreign affairs, the one sole object of royal sympathy was the aggrandisement of the Electorate. The courtiers who followed the king from Hanover fully

participated in the royal sentiments, and by both England was considered, as Count Broglio informed the French king, rather as a temporary possession, "to be made the most of while it lasted," than a reliable inheritance. Hence the rapacity of all of them. In Hanover George had been a rigid economist, and so strict in accounts that he was wont to settle all his household expenses on Saturday night. In England he became a prodigal in extravagance, squandered his revenue on all sides, and speedily had incurred by his profligate excesses a large arrear on the civil list, which parliament, to the surprise and exasperation of the nation, was called upon to liquidate. At a later period the nation learnt with surprise and indignation that a prince of the blood had connived at the sale of commissions in the army by his mistress*, partly as a source of maintenance; but the enormity was much more rife under the first Hanoverian. It formed the established regimen of his government that his concubines should have the disposal of all offices, civil and military, in the gift of the crown. Not only were offices and peerages sold, but even justice was compromised by bribing. Bolingbroke, it has been seen (p. 375.), obtained a remission of punishment by a large douceur to the Duchess of Kendal, who was the chief broker in these transactions. The accomplished Lord Halifax is described † as seeking the treasurer's staff by furnishing Madame Kilmangegge, a younger mistress of the king, "with money and a lover,"—Paul Methuen, a handsome Lord of the Treasury. Such practices had become almost part and parcel of the constitution, and there was hardly any shame or secrecy about them. Upon one occasion, indeed, Sir Robert

* The Duke of York and Mrs. Clark in 1809.

† Lord Wharncliffe's Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, vol. i. p. 116.

Walpole remonstrated with George on the rapacity of his ladies, and their selling his honours and places at high prices ; but the king merely replied, with a smile, “ I suppose you also are paid for your recommendations.” On another occasion the sovereign’s Hanoverian cook complained of the waste and plunder going on in his department ; on which the monarch jocularly observed, “ Never mind, my present revenues will bear the expense ; do you steal like the rest ;” and he added, with a hearty laugh, “ be sure you take enough.”

But it may be observed, however, of the dissoluteness of the present reign, if less gay than under the Stuarts, it was not so openly offensive to good manners. It was less shameless and riotous, not paraded at fairs and races, in the theatres and at taverns, but kept within the precincts of the palace. This may have been an accidental circumstance, originating in the advanced age and retired habits of the king, who generally tried to avoid the gaze of his subjects ; so that if he went to the opera it was in a sedan chair, and, when he got there, took refuge in the box of the maids of honour, seated behind one of his three mistresses. Consequently the libertinism of his court was not so publicly corruptive as after the Restoration, and gave less offence to the community. The secret history of every age is mostly reserved for a succeeding generation ; and it is probable only vague rumours had reached the people of the situation of the unhappy Sophia Dorothea of Zell, of the fatal catastrophe by which it was preceded, and of the German courtesans who accompanied the king to England.

During his whole reign George I. kept his wife Sophia Dorothea confined in a Hanoverian dungeon, and never permitted her to share his throne. His conduct is ascribed to jealousy of the Count Königsmark, a Swedish

nobleman of great personal attractions, who was assassinated in the electoral palace, and who in his youth had known Sophia in the court of Zell. There are two accounts of this mysterious affair, one by Lord Orford*, another by Dr. Cramer, in his "Memoirs of the Countess of Königsmark," published at Leipsic in 1836. From both accounts it appears that the princess had been indiscreet in her demeanour, and carried on a flirtation with the handsome Swede, but not to the extent of an adulterous criminality.

The old elector was scandalised by the presumed breach of connubial fidelity to his son, and resolved on the punishment of the offender, who was waylaid and poniarded on leaving the dressing-room of the princess. After this George I., who was in England at the time of the tragical occurrence, separated from Sophia, and imprisoned her for the remainder of her life, under the title of the Duchess of Halle. She died in 1726, having suffered an incarceration of thirty-three years in the castle of Adlen. Attempts were repeatedly made in the electoral family to effect a reunion between the electress and her consort, all of which she indignantly rejected. It has been said, that after George I. had ascended the English throne, a similar proposal was made to the princess by some influential persons in this country, to which she replied, "If I am guilty, I am not worthy to be your queen; if I am innocent, your king is not worthy to be my husband." In all his personal relations the monarch must be held to have been disreputable: as a king, a nullity; a relentless and unpitying husband, and a bad father, who from mere pique hated both his son and his princess as cordially as he did the queen, persecuted them in every relation of life, and would, had it been possible, have disinherited them.

* Works of Lord Orford, vol. iv. p. 280.

But the sovereign had been reared in a ruthless and impure school, and the unfavourable impressions he had received may be pleaded in extenuation. The Courts of the Continent were at this period the scenes of gross debauchery and atrocious crimes. George I. had two children by the queen, one of whom succeeded him on the English throne, and the other became the wife of Frederic William of Brandenburg, afterwards King of Prussia. The cruelties endured by this princess from her brutal husband far exceeded those inflicted by George I. on her mother Sophia Dorothea. Voltaire has commemorated some of the eccentric outrages of the first sovereign of Prussia, and the picture has been completed in the "Memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith." The despicable and unmanly ruffian practised the same cruelties towards his wife and children as are now only found emblazoned in the police reports of London of the dregs of its population. Kicking his daughter with brutal violence, or dragging her by the hair about the room, were ordinary occurrences.* His son, afterwards Frederic the Great, was subject to like or worse barbarities, with the additional refinement of torture, in being forced to witness the public execution of his friend, and be present at the castigation of a beloved mistress.

These brutalities were not peculiar to the meridian of Berlin. Almost every European court had its tale of horror or mystery, and to record them would be only

* Lord Chesterfield writes from the Hague, September 15. 1750 : "My last letters from Rome inform me that the King of Prussia had beaten the Princess Royal, his daughter, most unmercifully, dragged her about the room by the hair, kicking her in the belly and breast, till her cries alarmed the officers of the guards, who came in. She keeps her bed of the bruises she received. Twenty-pence a day is allowed for the maintenance of the Prince Royal in the castle of Custrin."—*Lord Mahon's Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 72., Appendix.

presenting a revolting drawback to Walpole's "History of Royal and Noble Authors." Happily, the age is advanced far beyond them, and would shudder at such a recital as that of the sacrifice of Don Carlos of Spain, or the parallel judicial immolation of his son, the unfortunate Iwan, by Peter the Great of Russia. Power was absolute, and subject to little or no responsibility, either to the law or public opinion. Christina of Sweden, it is well known, ordered the murder of her secretary in the palace of Fontainebleau without the French authorities taking cognisance of the violence, though of public notoriety, or the ex-queen being expelled from France. In England such enormities could not have been perpetrated with impunity. Still, though fast-days and thanksgiving days were more in vogue than at present, manners continued more openly indecorous and licentious. Most men of letters either had kept mistresses, or lived on terms of intimacy with those of others. This, however, chiefly applies only to one description of authors, the cultivators of elegant literature, or writers of the imaginative class. Philosophers are seldom deeply engaged in the entanglements of the heart. Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke, and Hobbes led a life of celibacy; the former, according to Voltaire, dying wholly intact. Poets are mostly amorous; it is the well-spring of their inspiration. But neither the language nor theme of much of the poetry of the time would be now admissible. In the miscellaneous writings of the most tasteful and exuberant of Queen Anne's poets, frequently occur phrases and sentiments alien to the present sense of delicacy and propriety. Pope, too, seems to have lived much in the fashion of his brother literati, and had his tender liaisons, the most commemorated being with the two Misses Blount, with both of whom he long carried on a wavering flirtation,

which finally ended in his preference of Martha, who is considered to have been his mistress. He is understood to have been audacious enough to make a declaration to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and which elicited from that gay and clever epistoler so derisive a reception that the bard of Twickenham never forgave, but visited, in utter disregard of prior lavish idolatry, with the most coarse and unscrupulous satire. In continuation, it may be added that the dramatist Congreve passed as the gallant of Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, who was vain of the connection. Prior made himself generally agreeable; but many of his writings, from indecency, would be now held utterly repulsive; and he has been reproached with spending his nights with "a little ale-house-keeper's wife." Gay appears to have escaped the scandal of his contemporaries, though eminently witty and fascinating, and living and dying in a patrician household. Dean Swift's amours were odious, selfish, and torturing; but the ascription to him by Sir Walter Scott of impotence, offers a ready solution of the chief mystery, and which is probable enough, from the dean's craving atrabilious temperament.

The age was mean, corrupt, and mendacious, and without regret a prominent feature of this chapter may be hastily dismissed. The law, from the triviality, privacy, and often inappreciable character of manners, abstains from taking cognisance of them, and has left this branch of social jurisdiction to the control of the community; but society still continued latitudinarian, and had not yet begun to prescribe a high standard of decency or decorum, either to prince or people. The curb most needed was that responsibility which makes every class dependent on the good opinion of the rest, and without which most indulgences are apt to degenerate into grossness. The

philosophy of the moral guarantee of each over all appears rightly set forth in the following extract:—

“ Philosophers have long considered it probable that the private manners of sovereigns are vulgar, their pleasures low, and their dispositions selfish ;— that the two extremes of life, in short, approach pretty closely to each other, and that the masters of mankind, when stripped of the artificial pomp and magnificence which invest them in public, resemble nothing so much as the meanest of the multitude. The ground of this opinion is that the very highest and the very lowest of mankind are equally beyond the influence of that wholesome control to which all the intermediate classes are subjected by their mutual dependence, and the need they have for the goodwill and esteem of each other. Those who are at the very bottom of the scale are below the sphere of this influence, and those at the very top are above it. The one have no chance of distinction by any effort they are capable of making ; and the other are secure of the highest degree without any effort to secure it.”—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xx.

The writer then elucidates his solution by examples of the degraded state of the German courts about the period of the Hanoverian accession. Gross intemperance in living, sexual irregularities, violent domestic quarrels, and a free dispensation of kicks and blows, formed the established regimen of most of the continental palaces. It was the regimen of the tinker and gipsy and other vagrant races, who, in their own favourite distich, “ care for nobody, since nobody cares for them.” The next reign refined a little in its progress, but did not, at the outset, promise any immediate improvement. George II began his reign by the commission of a highly criminal act in the destruction of the will of his predecessor ; and on one occasion, carried away by an ungovernable fit of passion, he struck his grandson, then Prince of Wales, and afterwards George III.*

* *Jesse's Memoirs of the Court of England*, vol. iii. p. 45.

CHAPTER XX.

REIGN OF GEORGE II.

George II. and his Predecessors. — Queen Caroline. — Policy of Sir Robert Walpole. — Bribery; Decline of Patriotism. — Public Prosperity, its Influence on Criminality; Popular Errors on Crime and its Characteristics; Prevalence of Intemperance; Causes of Demoralisation. — Education of the Gentry; Contempt of Trade and Industry. — London in respect of Health and Cleanliness. — Social Progress; Beau Nash and his Code of Etiquette. — Reform of the Calendar. — Condition of the Productive Classes. — The Church and Religious Tranquillity. — Rise and Influence of Methodism. — Police of the Metropolis and Environs. — Wars of George II. — Increase of Executive and Popular Power. — Hiring Public Writers. — Science, Literature, and the Arts.

THIS was a progressive reign both in its material aspects and public characters. The king was not altogether without the failings of his predecessor, but upon the whole was an improvement upon him. He was ten years younger, being in his forty-fourth year; and, though a Hanoverian by birth, he spoke our language fluently, was familiar with English society, sociable and accessible. He was much more temperate than George I., who, in the obliviousness of the punch-bowl, was wont to divulge secrets of state; but he was more fiery and passionate, and indulged in greater excess the unroyal vice of avarice.* This little-

* Jesse relates that he once spent a considerable time in turning over some logs of wood among which he had accidentally dropped a guinea (*Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 5.). But he opened his heart sometimes, and presented 2000*l.* to Trinity College, Cambridge, as the price of an evening's entertainment in their hall. His niggardliness was more a habit of watchfulness over small than large sums; and probably contracted, when more needed and pardonable, in the less affluent course of his antecedent German life. He saved little during his kingship, adding only 50,000*l.* to the 300,000*l.* he had amassed in his electorate.

ness was typified in his pinched, diminutive person and undignified demeanour, in all which he was less prepossessing than his sire. Both princes, however, cherished a strict sense of justice, were exemplary and methodical in business, possessed of undoubted courage in battle, and were covetous of martial fame, though neither evinced genius in war, or indeed in any pursuit. They were, in short, dull men of narrow minds, and void of artistical or intellectual sympathies. George II. sometimes read history, and had a memory retentive of dates or facts; but to the elegances of art and of literature, he was wholly insensible, and had the bad taste to affect to despise what he was unqualified to appreciate.

The deficiencies of the king were amply supplied by the superior endowments of his royal partner. Queen Caroline had been reared in a clownish German court, but, influenced by natural disposition and capabilities, aided by the example of a highly accomplished aunt, sister of George I., evinced a character decidedly clever, and which reminds one of those brilliant Frenchwomen of her age who figured in, if they did not take the lead in, Parisian society. While her saturnine husband was listening to the loose talk of a cornet of horse, or squaring battalions, his more gifted spouse might be shining as a beauty, a wit, a metaphysician, or a theologian. "Her levees," says Coxe, "were a strange picture of the motley character and manners of a queen and a learned woman. She received company while she was at her toilet, prayers and sometimes a sermon was read*; learned men and divines

* One of her chaplains demurred to this incongruous assemblage. While Caroline was undergoing her metempsychosis in an adjoining room, she directed him to proceed with the prayers; but he objected, as he termed it, to "whistling them through the keyhole." He seems not to have been so complacent as a brother chaplain, of whom it is

were intermixed with courtiers and ladies of the household. The conversation turned on metaphysical subjects, blended with repartees, sallies of mirth, and the tittle-tattle of a drawing-room." During ten years Caroline is said to have been "more king than her husband," who seldom went wrong, except when led contrary to her advice or suggestion. It was necessary, however, that the charm which influenced the monarch should be unseen. Like Sir Bashful Constant, the king's admiration of his wife was unbounded; and on one occasion he declared no other "woman was worthy to unbuckle her shoe;" yet he was extremely indignant at the idea of being subjective to female government. "A fine thing, indeed," he exclaimed to Walpole, "to be governed by one's wife, as people say I am!" Aware of this feeling, the queen was careful to conceal her power, and in the presence of third persons especially, she always declared she knew nothing of business, and was incompetent to discuss state affairs. Consequently, when Sir Robert Walpole entered the royal closet to consult on public questions with the king, and the conclusions of which had probably been previously settled between her majesty and the minister, it was the wont of the queen to drop a curtsey and retire.*

Between them the fiery colt was adroitly managed, and the affairs of the realm never more happily conducted.

related by the same authority (Lord Orford), that he intoned a mimicry of caterwauling for the king's amusement during dinner, standing in full canonicals behind the monarch's chair.

* It may be mentioned among the minor deserts of the queen of George II., that she was a great local improver, both at Richmond and Kensington. Millions have enjoyed the delightful promenade along the Serpentine river in Hyde Park without thinking that they were indebted to a suggestion of Queen Caroline for the conversion of a string of unwholesome ponds into that fine sheet of water.

The third and leading triumvir claims, however, something more than an allusive notice. The fame of Sir Robert Walpole is rising, and his noble presence stands worthily among the statuary immortals of the new Parliament House. He was a true-born Englishman, not in the ironical sense of Defoe, but in origin and the veritable attributes of that character. His family had vegetated in the county of Norfolk since the Conquest, and counted eighteen generations in the direct male line who, in the rank of country gentlemen, had contentedly disported themselves on their hereditary acres in the pursuits and amusements of rural existence. Sir Robert was the first to emerge from the obscurity of his race, and, after passing the educational ordeal of Eton and Cambridge, enter on the career of a statesman. His course was not unchequered, nor without impeachment. But his errors seem to have had one source,—they were innate, and originated in the bold, frank, undisguised nature of the man. What others did clandestinely, Walpole did openly; hence the license of his private life, his coarse language and untimely jests, and avowed contempt of saintly pretensions, either in politics or conduct. He was charged with corruption or something more, and was imprisoned in the Tower for it; but it was never fully proved, and the imputation lost him no friendship. Probably it was only the rage of party, which was furious enough at times to call Alexander Pope a “blockhead,” and Marlborough a “coward.”

The venalities of the minister, whatever they may have been, were extenuated if not redeemed by solid wisdom and practical sense in the management of public affairs. His principles of government were the maintenance of peace, the Protestant settlement, and economy in the national expenditure. In these directions he held his course during a premiership of twenty-five years, with

rare constancy, firmness, and discretion ; and the merit of which is likely to be more fully appreciated by posterity when the standard of statesmanship has been made more referable to the certain and enduring interests of the community, than to an illusive and ostentatious external policy. France at this period was not less fortunate than England in the character of her prime minister, Cardinal Fleury being, equally with Walpole, intent on abstinence from foreign interventions, and an economical administrator, though in face of the lavish and unprincipled court of Louis XV.

Besides a judicious and conservative domestic policy, Sir R. Walpole had personal qualities of a high and estimable class. To great prudence, sound judgment in council, and a forcible eloquence in the senate, were added manners in social life, eminently free, jocular, and confiding. He was humane, generous, and benevolent ; and the equanimity of his temper was not easily disturbed. In active business he was first rate, never appearing hurried or confused. Lord Hervey said of him, “ He does everything with the same ease and tranquillity as if he were doing nothing ; ” and Lord Chesterfield contrasts the quiet methodical business habits of Walpole with those of the Duke of Newcastle, who always appeared hurried and confused with not one-tenth of the work of the minister.

Sir Robert was less a friend to learning than to field sports, a hospitable table, and a humour tending to the licentious. He was not, however, wholly regardless of literary claims. He gave a pension to the author of the “ Night Thoughts,” and, at the instance of Pope, obtained for a friend of the poet an abbey in France. But if Walpole was not a lover of letters, he certainly had mastered much that was useful and true either from books or men. Many of his utterances have become aphoristic ; and it

will be sufficient to allude to them to evince his shrewd, observing, and penetrating spirit. His remark, that history is little better than fable, has been proved by subsequent and closer inquiries a highly probable conclusion. Patriotism he held to be often spurious, and referred it to personal malice or disappointed ambition. “A patriot, sir ! why patriots spring up like mushrooms. I could raise fifty of them within four-and-twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable or insolent demand, and up starts a patriot.”* His reasons against the repeal of the Septennial Act had solidity in them. Triennial parliaments, he argued, would render the Executive too amenable to popular opinion, which he held unsafe, being too impulsive, variable, and too much in extremes for regular and consistent government.† Upon bribery and corruption, with which Walpole’s name is most associated, it may not be uninteresting to listen to him. He held that it was impossible by such base means to influence a majority of parliamentary electors to choose such men as would put their liberties in jeopardy. “When,” said he, “no encroachments are made upon the rights of the people, when the people do not think themselves in any danger, there may be many of the electors who, by a bribe of ten guineas, might be induced to vote for one candidate rather than another; but if the court were making any encroachments upon the rights of the people, a proper spirit would, without doubt, arise in the nation; and in such a case I am persuaded that none, or very few, even of such electors could be induced to vote for a court candidate — no, not for ten times the sum.”‡ In-

* Speech, Feb. 11. 1741.

† Speech, March 13. 1734.

‡ Pictorial History of England, vol. iv. p. 412.

volved in these admissions is a profound truth, confirmed by a later experience, though at first view they savour of laxity. The fact is, that public spirit is an element which rises or falls with the occasion. In quiet times, when parties are rather nominal than real, not being divided on great questions, the neutral or inert portion of the community is most numerous, and election bribery is likely to be most feasible ; and this, happily, is exactly the time when corruption is comparatively innocuous and least detrimental to the common weal. But let the times change and vital interests be in issue, which cause general excitement, then, those who were before indifferent become interested : instead of yielding to corruption, a spirit of patriotism is awakened by which electors are impelled from the greatness of the stake to prefer the public good to private gain ; and this independence reduces the power of bribery to its minimum state. Patriotism was most rife in Rome when its fortunes were at the lowest ebb ; but declined and became extinct when Rome had conquered the world, and become satiated with its spoils. The influence of the principle was forcibly brought out during the agitation of the Reform Bill in 1831-2, which was carried, and a corrupt body of electors, and their representatives too, made alive to the need and justice of reform by the excitement of public opinion, from energetic appeals within and without the walls of Parliament.

The policy of Sir Robert Walpole's administration rendered the reign of George II. more pacific than that of his predecessor. Of the thirty-three years of the king's government, only thirteen were years of war, the remainder of peace, prosperity, and great internal improvements. Shipping increased ; agriculture, commerce, and the manufacturing arts flourished. Under numerous

enclosure acts the waste lands were reclaimed ; new roads were opened, and the old ones improved ; bridges were erected, and numerous rivers widened or deepened. The activity of national industry and increase of riches are evidenced by the extent of local improvements, especially in London and Edinburgh. The growth of commerce and manufactures caused a great addition to the population in the chief seats of industry and enterprise in the country ; in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, and Liverpool. In every sea then known was seen the busy flag of England, bearing its products and its people. Our colonies were making rapid strides from infancy to adult life, particularly in North America. Already the New World had become the land of refuge and of hope to the needy and enterprising both from England and the Continent. In one year, that of 1729, there emigrated to the province of Pennsylvania no fewer than 6208 persons, of whom, as at a much later period, the great mass were Irish, forced into exile by high rents and destitution. Of the 6208 emigrants, 243 were German, 267 English and Welsh, 43 Scotch, and the rest Irish. The Germans were all passengers, the Scotch all servants, the English, Welsh, and Irish, partly servants and partly passengers.*

The exuberance of national prosperity had the not unusual drawback of a great augmentation in crime and immorality. It seems a condition of the material affluence of nations, as of the richness of vegetable nature, that it should be simultaneously fertile of good and evil, of weeds and flowers ; but, as the watchful husbandman is careful to remove the tares, and favour the growth of useful fruits, so ought it to be the aim of the legislator,

* *History and Philosophy of the Productive Classes*, p. 32.

the moralist, and the general government of a state so to direct their endeavours to the control of the pursuits, occupations, and amusements of a people, that they shall be most favourable to the enjoyment of the greatest possible amount of benefit, with the least alloy of accompanying vice and turpitude. In this discrimination lies the proper field for popular education to cultivate, and moral and political philosophy to explain and enforce.

Under George II. crimes were not only more numerous, but more atrocious; and manners were more openly licentious and depraved. But this presents only the dark side of the picture, unredeemed by its counterpart. Abundance may be dissipated in two ways,—in use or abuse; and a season of plenty affords scope for both, according to the habits, intelligence, and dispositions of individuals. Some will pervert their superior command of means to vicious indulgences; others, more rationally, will seek to realise from them solid comforts and prolonged gratifications. Both sorts, however, will exist in a greater profusion and in greater intensity; for it is a fact, though the contrary opinion is sometimes expressed, that the force and activity of the human passions, good and bad, are less elicited by privation and servitude than by fulness, freedom, and individual independence. Hence a state of general wellbeing is likely to be most prolific in both virtues and vices; but the existence of the former is more private and less open to public cognisance, while crimes are of general notoriety, are published in newspapers, and paraded before the tribunals of justice for prosecution and punishment. A fallacious view is thus apt to be taken of the influence of prosperity on the national character, that it tends to its deterioration rather than improvement; while the correct inference is that it tends to both, but in a much greater degree to refine and

elevate the manners and condition of a people, than to degrade and demoralise them.

These explanations are essential to avert an erroneous impression of the results of the peace and plenteousness which formed marked features of the early portion of the Georgian era. Upon the first acquisition of benefits it seldom happens that the possessors make the wisest application of them, but experiment upon them to discover their true value in life. Such appears to have been partly the character of the period under notice; it was an experimental age, and had the term of trial been sufficiently prolonged, without interruption from wars or other adverse influences, it might have issued in the attainment of the highest pitch of public felicity. It will be best, however, before entering further into the philosophy of the subject, to delineate the characteristic features of the time.

One of the most degrading vices of the age was inordinate intemperance. This may be partly attributed to the substitution of a new liquor for the national beverage; and the use of gin in place of beer, may be reckoned one of the drawbacks of the Revolution. In consequence of the popular passion for the new stimulant, drunkenness was a raging vice during the prosperous reign of George II. According to an inquiry of the magistrates in 1736, there were, within the limits of Westminster, the Tower, and Finsbury divisions, exclusive of the City and Southwark, 7044 places where gin was publicly sold by retail, besides what was privately sold in garrets, cellars, and back rooms. "Painted boards," Smollet says, "were put up, inviting people to be drunk for a penny, and dead drunk for twopence." Cellars were provided, strewed with straw, to which they conveyed the wretches overwhelmed with intoxication, and in which they lay

until they had recovered some use of their faculties, when they again had recourse to the same mischievous poison. It was to restrain these bestialities that the licence and spirit duties were raised. But the populace broke through all restraint: gin was publicly sold in the streets without either licence or duty; informers were intimidated, and the magistrates, through fear or corruption, did not enforce the law. In this way the revenue was defrauded; and it was for the prevention of such evasions that the experiment, in 1743, was tried of the efficacy of a lower rate of duties. It was justly argued, that more moderate duties, rigidly enforced, would be better for the revenue, and lessen the consumption of spirits among the lowest of the people. The results answered these predictions, and to which the fact of the sale of spirits being soon after limited to a more respectable class of retailers essentially contributed.

A gambling spirit of speculation tended greatly to excess and extravagance. The historian just referred to remarks that, "during the infatuation produced by the infamous South Sea bubble, luxury and profligacy increased to a shocking degree of extravagance. The adventurers, intoxicated by their imaginary wealth, pampered themselves with the rarest dainties, and the most expensive wines that could be imported. They purchased the most sumptuous furniture, equipage, and apparel, though without taste or discernment. They indulged their criminal passions to the most scandalous excess; their discourse was the language of pride, insolence, and the most ridiculous ostentation." These are only the ordinary vices of upstart wealth, unaccompanied by refinement or intellectual culture, and of which every commercial town in England or America is constantly offering examples; but more general causes are necessary

to account for the settled and varied forms of criminal turpitude which disfigured the period under consideration.

These causes I apprehend may be sought, first, in the absence of religious restraint. The wit, ridicule, and dissolute example of the Cavaliers, had not only driven out the austerities of Puritanism, but the substance of piety itself. Society had partly recovered from the debasement of the Restoration under the more staid and decorous sway of William III. and Queen Anne; but a reaction ensued on the accession of the Brunswick family. All the princes of this dynasty lived in open concubinage, had their mistresses as an indispensable state appendage, by which the immorality of the aristocracy was kept in countenance, and senators, bishops, and church dignitaries did not disdain to watch the politics and profit by the favour of the predominating beauty of the day.*

* The vice of concubinage did not, however, make its first appearance with the Hanoverians. A mistress made part of the settled paraphernalia of every continental court; and William III., who patronised the Countess of Orkney, and lavished upon her vast possessions, formed no exception to the prevalent fashion. George I. brought over a whole seraglio of faded beauties, odious alike from age, plainness and rapacity. It was the greed and decayed aspects of the German harem more than its indecorum or immorality which seems to have excited popular indignation. This feeling the people were not slow to express; and upon one occasion, on the king's mistresses appearing abroad, they were greeted in not very courteous terms. It elicited a response from one of the ladies, who, in broken English, said, "Worthy folks, we come for all your goods!" "Yes," exclaimed a citizen, "and all our chattels too." It may be observed of the first George, that the Duchess of Kendal, the king's oldest and most confidential retainer, supplied the place of his imprisoned wife, was his housekeeper, and presided over his evening parties. His successor was more fortunate in his queen, and would have been well content with his belle esprit Caroline; but, as just observed, a mistress was held to be as much a part of the etiquette of a court as a lord chamberlain or poet laureate.

The demoralising example of the court and nobility extended to other classes, and was aggravated by the defective state of the laws of Marriage. Prior to the act of 1753, marriages might be solemnised in England with the same facility as, till recently, at Gretna Green. No notice or publication of banns was requisite; any clergyman in any place might unite a couple of any age in wedlock, without licence, consent of parents, or other preliminary guarantee. Consequently the ceremony was often performed in cellars, garrets, or alehouses, by the refuse of the clergy, without any other consideration than that of pocketing a half crown or five shilling fee. Keith's chapel in Mayfair and that of the Fleet were the most fashionable and popular resorts. Clerical debtors imprisoned were active in the disreputable traffic, and used to hover about the Fleet like porters for employment. The customs attendant on the nuptial ceremony were in keeping, it being the fashion to admit strangers into the bridal chamber; and royalty formed no exception in the observance of this strange usage. Of course a tie so formed and consummated was loosely observed, and the journals of the day are replete with advertisements relative to runaway wives or husbands. A remarkable case of conjugal abuse, originating in the existing state of the law, coming before the House of Lords, the Marriage Act was introduced by Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. This great improvement in the matrimonial contract doubtless led to the hardly less needed amendment in post-nuptial rites.

The most prolific source of licentiousness and crime may be traced to the low moral and intellectual standard of the age. In mathematics, physical science, and metaphysics, there had been considerable advances; but the more available literature of common life, that which

purifies the heart and elevates the manners, had only just entered on its career of usefulness.

In the absence of mental engagements, the ordinary substitutes are animal license and indulgences; and England, under George II., was something like California or an Australian settlement, in which the means of gratification are profuse, without the taste or science for a discreet use of them. Addison, Steele, and the other essayists, had sought to supply this defect, by subjecting the nation to a salutary course of monition and ethical discipline; and, so far as the outward presentment of vice abounded, they were eminently successful; but they hardly reached the foundation of the evil. The education of all classes was meagre and inefficient. As to the poor, they had scarcely become an object of intellectual cognisance; and those above them had perhaps been better left to their natural dispositions, than aided by the training they received. The substance of a young gentleman's education consisted of a smattering of Latin and Greek, and a rambling acquaintance with the classics, acquired either at a public or private school. To these might be added a slight acquaintance with the French* or Italian language, and the accomplishments of dancing, fencing, and a little music. Science was deemed only suitable for professional characters. The grand finish was the tour of Europe, in which the stripling was led forth by a travelling tutor to see the palaces and pictures of Italy, the mountains and glaciers of Switzerland, and

* A mastery of French was a rare accomplishment among the higher classes. Sir Robert Walpole could not speak it. In the Augustan age of Queen Anne none of the Tory ministry could speak it with fluency except Lord Bolingbroke, who, on that account, coupled with his polished manners, was preferred to negotiate the preliminaries of the Treaty of Utrecht.

the princes and minions of the dissolute courts of the continent. He was then equally qualified to shine in parliament or at a masquerade ; or, if unable to resist the contamination of foreign vices, might degenerate into a gambler, duellist, bully captain, or some other tribe of the numerous disorderlies which then infested the metropolis.

The education of females corresponded, only was a degree inferior in quality and texture, to that of their male admirers. A little music, some skill in dancing, and arithmetic enough to keep the score in card-playing, sufficed. "A fashionable lady was thought learned enough if she could barely read and write ; if she could finish a letter orthographically, she passed for a wit."* Her range of reading was not limited, but demoralising, consisting of works of fiction, and such ribald plays as decency has long since excluded from dramatic representation.

The most enviable if not the most elevated condition of social existence was located in the rural districts. Agriculture was the predominant pursuit of the community, and was highly favoured both by the interests and policy of the legislature. Of this a remarkable proof was afforded by the payment of a bounty on the exportation of corn, under the pretext of promoting tillage husbandry by keeping up the price in the home market. This protection began immediately after the Revolution, and was continued without relaxation up to the year 1773. During the early portion of this period, either from the temptation of the premium on exportation, or the produce of the country outgrowing the consumption, large quantities of corn were annually exported. A show,

* Pictorial History of England, vol. iv. p. 814.

at least, of agricultural prosperity was thus obtained by the sacrifice of the other orders of society. But while the system of the landlords paying themselves out of the public treasury for keeping up the price of their produce, lasted, it doubtless formed, for their exclusive benefit, a source of great influence and opulence. The period from 1688 was indeed the palmy time of country gentlemen. Under William and Anne they were indulged with splendid victories, which, if profitless, afforded in their seclusion a source of exultation and pleasurable excitement. Under the more pacific era of the first two Georges they partook of gratifications of other kinds, in discharging the functions of grand jurors at the assizes, in dispensing minor justice to their tenantry and yeomanry at quarter-sessions, and in visiting with correctional punishment, in their rustic halls, the transgressions of publicans, poachers, absconding husbands, and erring females. "It was," as I have elsewhere remarked*, "the age of the Squire Westerns, set off with the milder virtues of an Allworthy or Roger de Coverley, graced with the recondite but profitless erudition of Parson Adams, shaded by the irregularities of a Thornhill or Tom Jones, and the spurious ethics of Philosopher Square. The chase, shooting, angling, card-playing, dancing, hard eating and drinking, were the chief pastimes; politics and literature being only secondary resources; and what the rural gentry chiefly knew of refined life was picked up at college or in London, where they might have rented chambers for a few terms in the Temple, visited the theatres, or frequented the coffee-houses to which Dryden, Pope, Addison, Swift, Steele, and other wits of the day resorted."

* History of the Productive Classes, Chambers's edition.

Trade was still regarded with disdain by the generality of country gentlemen; and such were the mistaken notions in which they were reared that even younger sons, though deprived of a share in the family inheritance, preferred a life of penury, indolence, and dependence, to the pursuits of commerce, which they esteemed derogatory to their rank and pedigree. But if averse to fusion with the urban population, the higher mercantile classes were not, but had begun to evince a disposition to approximate to and share in honours and dignities, by seeking aristocratic distinctions. In London, while several of the most eminent of the merchants and civic functionaries had reached the degree of knighthood, all who were of consideration or even of respectability had the title of esquire or gentleman appended to their names. It does not appear, however, that many of the commercial families had reached the peerage; but the mercantile interest formed a distinct phalanx in the House of Commons, headed by Sir John Bernard, an able financier and eminent merchant of the city. By the Qualification Act of Queen Anne, the aristocracy sought to preserve the parliamentary ascendancy of the landed interest; but the smaller boroughs having become a marketable commodity, rich capitalists found an easy entrance into the legislature. This was first observed in the general elections of 1747 and 1754; but, though bribery had been prevalent since the Revolution, Mr. Hallam thinks* that neither corruption nor the sale of seats like other property was openly practised till near the end of the reign of George II.

In London, the emigration west did not commence till the next reign; and the merchants generally lived in the

* Constitutional History, vol. iii. p. 402.

city, having their warehouses or counting-houses fronting the street; behind were frequently their dwellings, which, though dark and confined externally, were often expensively and luxuriously furnished. Up to the reign of Queen Anne, London was to England what Paris now is to France—every thing. It was the seat of politics, pleasure, commerce, and of that conflux of idlers exhaled by the prosperity of an opulent nation. Hardly any other city possessed either attraction or influence. What now are cities were then towns; towns were villages; and villages were nests of cottages. The whole interior of the country was agricultural, and exhibited only various kinds of rusticity. Country gentlemen, when they emerged from the obscurity of their homes, sought London as the centre of traffic, power, legislation, society, amusement, and dissipation. Notwithstanding, however, these allurements, the capital still continued an inconvenient place for passengers, and unwholesome for residence. The streets, for the most part, were unpaved, and each tradesman paved the entrance to his shop as taste dictated. A skirting, railed off for security, formed the only foot-pathway. The kennels, which were open on both sides of the street, swelled into inundations in wet weather; while in summer drought they sent forth pestilent exhalations from the garbage with which they were choked up. A heavy shower of rain was like the overflowing of the Nile, covering every accessible place with a deluge of water and mud. In 1736 the streets began to be lighted, as a preventive of robberies, with glass lamps, few and far between; and these were only lit up till midnight, and that for only one-half the year; so that at a late hour, and during the remaining six months, the belated citizen was left to the guidance of his own lantern, or of link-boys, often leagued with

thieves, and who perhaps treacherously conducted him into some ruffianly ambush, where he was suddenly left in darkness, knocked down, robbed, and perhaps murdered.

People are so accustomed to the quiet and security of modern thoroughfares, that an effort of imagination is almost requisite to conceive the danger and inconvenience of the state of things I have been describing. It is only by retrospection that we can obtain a conception of the annoyances from which we have escaped, and the benefits derived from salutary laws, order, science, and opulence. What an abyss of horrors and midnight confusion, indeed, London must have been, in the absence of an efficient police, street-lighting, sewerage, and the other surface and subterranean machinery that now, almost invisibly, is constantly ministering to the comfort, health, and protection of the inhabitants of the metropolis!

Jail fevers were of frequent occurrence. They doubtless originated in the crowded state of the jails, absence of cleanliness, ventilation, classification, and the other precautions now included under the head of prison discipline. On the western circuit, in 1730, Chief Baron Pengelly, his officers and servants, together with the high sheriff of Somerset, died suddenly of fever arising from the horrid stench emanating from the prisoners brought to their trials. A similar visitation had previously happened at Oxford, where the judge, sheriff, grand-jurymen, and some hundreds besides, all died from an infection caught from the prisoners tried at the assizes.*

For the reasons already assigned, a period of general prosperity tends to multiply the number and increase the intensity of all social elements ; of all elements that are

* *History and Political Philosophy of the Productive Classes.*

expansive or capable of increase or diminution. National happiness and national misery are both increased. Crimes become more atrocious and more numerous. Even diseases, as just noted, increase in virulence and variety. All this apparent antagonism is compatible with progress, and, paradoxical as it may appear, admits of explanation, in the fact, that under more favourable conditions of existence, human vitality is augmented, and a greater productive force is evoked, both for good and evil; and whether one or other is predominant depends on the direction given to a community by corresponding activity in its moral and political agencies. In this respect the Georgian period was not without distinction, and many works of benevolence and enlightened legislation may be commemorated.

Besides the act for preventing clandestine marriages, an act was passed for regulating places of amusement, by requiring them to be licensed. By another statute, persons impeached of treason, or other offence, by the House of Commons, were allowed to defend themselves by counsel. The repeal of the statutes against witchcraft afforded proof of growing intelligence. Of the same character was the reward offered by parliament for the discovery of a north-west passage to the East, and the liberal grant of 20,000*l.* to Mr. Harrison for the improvement of chronometers by which the longitude at sea might be better ascertained. The crown was enabled to raise money by lottery for the purchase of the Sloane Library and Museum, the Harleian Manuscripts, and Montagu House, by which the foundation was laid for the British Museum. But the most useful legislative enactment was that adopted in 1751 for regulating the commencement of the year, and correcting the calendar according to the Gregorian computation. The New Style had been introduced by Pope

Gregory in the sixteenth century; but the authority of the pontiff extending only over Catholic countries, the ancient computation continued in use in England, Russia, and other northern states. By the new act the civil year was made more nearly to correspond with the astronomical year, and the commencement of the year was made to begin on January 1st instead of March 25th.

Under the influence of prevalent energies, public amusements and places of resort greatly multiplied about the commencement and towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Ranelagh, Vauxhall Gardens, Bellsizze House, Hampstead; the Folly House, Blackwall; and the Folly, opposite Somerset House, which last was a floating coffee-house on the Thames, were the chief centres of town attraction to the votaries of pleasure. The diseased, the idle, the hypochondriacal, super-opulent, and aged, sought to cure or divert their maladies by virtue of the healing waters of Bath, Tunbridge, and Epsom Wells. The former had become so famous, that above 8000 families generally repaired to it in the course of a season. It owed much of its sudden celebrity to the legislative aptitude of the celebrated Beau Nash, who, for the benefit of the luxurious, devised many regulations tending to their quiet and enjoyment: such were his decrees against scandal and politics in private intercourse,—holding that all the whisperers of calumnies should be held to be the authors of them; and against gentlemen smoking in the public rooms, or appearing in caps or gowns, or dancing in top-boots, after the fashion of the squires of Hogs Norton. Bath, in consequence of these and other salutary ordinances of the ball-room Solon, became the standard of etiquette, and, by the model it afforded, was the means of introducing in all similar places, and in society generally, more agreeable and refined behaviour. In London

gentlemen resorted for refection and politics to the Cocoa-Tree and White's Chocolate-house, or to the British, Smyrna, and St. James's Coffee-houses. The citizens had their political discussions in club-houses, of which there was one in almost every parish. Public questions at this period, unlike the present, had little to do with popular or constitutional rights, the interests of commerce, or the intellectual state or comforts of the people, but mostly turned on foreign topics, the balance of power, the ambition of the Bourbons, the electorate of Hanover, or the claims of the Stuarts.

The condition of the working classes improved under the first two Georges, though there was remarkable steadiness in the circumstances affecting their position. From 1720 to 1760 there was no material variation either in the prices of provisions or the rate of wages. Throughout the whole of this period wheat kept steadily from 32s. to 35s. per quarter, which was lower in price than it had been under King William and Queen Anne. In respect of butchers' meat, the mean price of mutton from 1706 to 1730 was $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ the pound, and 3d. from 1730 to 1760. In 1710 the mean price of beef was $1\frac{1}{10}d.$ the pound; veal $2\frac{2}{3}d.$, and lamb $2\frac{1}{2}d.$; from 1740 to 1760 these increased from one fourth to one third in price. As regards wages, those of husbandmen rose a little towards the end of the reign of George II., but not those of artificers. According to Mr. Barton's table, wages in husbandry were, in 1725, per week 5s. 4d., in 1751 6s., in 1770 7s. 4d. Contemporary with these rates the contract (rather lower than the market) rate of wages at Greenwich Hospital were for a carpenter, bricklayer, or mason 2s. 6d.; they so continued till about 1795, when they suddenly rose to 5s. per day.

Men will always live upon the best provisions they

can get ; and a safer criterion of their physical condition than wages or prices is the kind of food they eat. Garrison mentions that in the reign of Henry VIII. the gentry had wheaten bread for their tables, but their household and poor neighbours were usually obliged to content themselves with rye, barley, and oats. It appears from the household-book of Sir Edward Coke, that in 1596 rye-bread and oatmeal formed a considerable part of the diet of servants in great families in the southern counties. Barley-bread is stated in the grant of a monopoly by Charles I., in 1626, to be the usual food of the ordinary sort of people. It seems likely that only a small proportion of the common people of the southern counties ate wheaten bread at the Revolution ; but the number continued to increase, till, on the accession of George III., more than one-half of the population of England and Wales used wheat. This appears from the inquiries of Mr. Charles Smith, who in 1766 published some valuable tracts on the corn trade. Taking the population at 6,000,000, the eaters of wheat were 3,750,000; of barley, 739,000 ; of rye, 880,000 ; and of oats, 623,000. Thus, on the accession of George III., fully five eighths of the people of England lived upon wheat ; and of the remainder, rather more than one eighth upon rye, about one eighth upon barley, and rather less than one eighth upon oats.* Wheat already constituted the food of the great majority of the people in the southern and midland counties ; barley was consumed by a majority of the people only in Wales ; rye was not eaten at all in the south-western counties of Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall ; but in the five northern counties of Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and York,

* Pictorial History of England, vol. iv. p. 850.

it was the ordinary food of about a third of the inhabitants; oats were the food of another third of the people in the northern counties, and of considerably more than a third of the people of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derby, Nottingham, and Lincoln; but were only used to a small extent in the midland counties, and not at all in any other part of the kingdom. Oats, as the author remembers, continued to be generally used by labourers and some handicraftsmen, and partly by the better sort of tradespeople, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, till after the commencement of the nineteenth century.

So recently as 1833 it has been stated that the diet of farmers in the northern counties, of those who farmed to the extent of from 400*l.* to 600*l.* a year, consisted of barley-bread, potatoes, milk, and a small quantity of bacon.* This humble fare, coupled with exemplary industry, doubtless enables the farmers of the north to pay much higher rents, as the authority referred to admits, than those in the midland and southern counties of England; but *cui bono?*

A remarkable feature in the religious aspects of the time had been the prevalence for half a century of an exemplary tranquillity. This absence of spiritual strife might be partly traced to the spirit of toleration inaugurated by the Orange revolution, aided by the writings of John Locke, and partly to the general peace and abundance of the Georgian reigns, in the blessings of which all classes had participated. Whatever the cause, a singular harmony existed among the different denominations of worship, and each seemed content with its own faith and the civil status the law had guaranteed. Doctrines and dogmas had almost ceased to be agitated; or if they were it was in a charitable spirit, and with a disposition to

* Agricultural Report, Sess. 1833, p. 306.

mutual indulgence. There was no bitterness, or abiding antipathies. If a theological tilt did arise, it was maintained in a gentlemanly fashion, and the disputants, like the knights of chivalry, usually retired from the lists un-hurt, and with mutual expressions of esteem and admiration. Religion in consequence became no obstruction to social amenities, and the heads of the Church and the heads of the Dissenters not only cordially interchanged the civilities of ordinary life, but occasionally appeared together at Court without jealousy or animosity. The portraits of the eminent divines of the age indicate some of the tendencies of the prevalent concord and urbanity; and though the plump, rubicund faces, flowing curls, and fashionable robes of the leading Episcopalians, Independents, Catholics, and Unitarians may savour too much of the world, they are certainly demonstrative of a high state of individual contentment and beatitude.

However, a bomb burst on this calm sea, and its surface was disturbed by a more rigid order of Methodism, which appeared about 1730, and whose rise is intimately connected with the progress of the industrious orders. Its founders were John Wesley of the Arminian, and George Whitefield of the Calvinistic branch, whose united and soul-stirring appeals, though differing in kind, were deeply interesting to the more humble classes of the community. In the first place the fundamental principle of genuine Christianity was fully carried out in the inculcations of these eminent persons, by the poor being raised up to and considered on an equality with their teachers. Excluded from the pulpits of the established church, of which both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield were regularly ordained ministers, they, of necessity, if not from policy, were compelled early in their career to resort to preaching in the open air on Kennington Com-

mon, Blackheath, and other free places of populous assemblage. As a consequence, if not a needful adjunct of field-preaching, next followed lay-preaching, or admissions to preach, of laymen without other qualifications for the office than a call or instantaneous conversion, and presumed zeal and fitness for the ministry. These alone were calculated to win over the masses of society. Methodism allowed of equal rights and privileges—a spiritual democracy—which, though, like extreme democracies of a secular kind, it has subsequently issued in vesting the ruling power in a select few, it was, at the beginning, well calculated to obtain ready favour and acceptance amongst the inexperienced multitude.

Other causes, besides field-preaching and lay-ministers, may be assigned for the spread of the new religion. The leading assumptions of its founders over contemporary rivalry were of a more intense zeal, sanctity, and moral strictness, which have been always found, from the days of St. Francis, Dominic, and Ignatius Loyola, infallible modes of proselytising. A second popular adaptation consisted in the fact, that no lengthened trial, no intellectual or educational qualification, nor any logical deduction from reason or authority, was requisite to constitute a convert to the new worship. An impulse of the Spirit was alone needed; and this, experience has invariably shown, was most likely to be found among the young, ardent, and enthusiastic—those who at once make the most zealous, if not the most steadfast disciples and efficient propagators of new opinions. It follows that Methodism is naturally, and always has been, the attraction of the labouring population, and has never, with pervading effect, penetrated into a higher region. It is essentially, in all its peculiarities, the poor man's religion. Whether to him it has been a blessing, it would be extraneous to

the present purpose minutely to investigate. It has one strong claim to consideration, which every pretension of a like nature must always command, even if mistakenly directed, in the fact that its appeals were directed to the salvation of the millions, and roused a more vigilant watchfulness over their interests in quarters where the discharge of contracted duties had been culpably remiss. It has also been frequently observed, that it reclaimed from a life of wickedness those whom nothing less save the terrors conceived and depicted by the fervid imagination of Methodism, could have accomplished. This, however, it may be remarked, was a good often effected at a needless expense of personal suffering and apprehension.

The rapid spread of the new doctrines caused some respectable but mistaken zealots to recommend that government should interfere to check such novel ebullitions of enthusiasm. Except, however, in repressing some excesses of the multitude at Taunton and a few other towns, no attempt was made at coercion. Toleration was a leading policy of the time, in unison with a creditable declaration of George II. that "during his reign there should be no persecution for conscience sake." The beneficent intention of the monarch being seconded by the wisdom of his ministers and the forbearance of the Anglican prelacy, the notions of the new sectaries were left, as new notions mostly should, to their own merits and the interpretation of the community. It was an age of inquiry: if fanaticism was abroad, there was also an active spirit of intelligence and philosophy. Newton, Hobbes, Locke, Bolingbroke, Pope, Addison, Swift, and Halley in England; Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Euler, and the Bernouilles on the continent deservedly excited more in-

terest than kings or their satellites, of noisy politicians and pestilent warriors.

Except among the unenlightened, Methodism can claim few social trophies. It was no boon, in general, to the middle and educated classes. It only narrowed their views and feelings; burdened them with forms; restricted them from recreations which keep the mind in health; discouraged accomplishments that adorn life; separated them from general society; and substituted the desponding and precarious impulses of enthusiasm for the cheering and steady light of the Established Church. But to the ignorant, the depraved, the violent, and to the victims of sensual indulgences, it was, though a coarse application suited only to the hardened and illiterate, a restorative and saving grace. England at this time, it must be remembered, was far from having reached its present state of order and moral discipline. It was still an age of considerable recklessness, and even ruffianism; of desperate highwaymen, burglars, coiners, and prison breakers; of the Jonathan Wilds, Richard Turpins, Jack Sheppards, and the other daring miscreants who figure in the pages of the "Newgate Calendar." It retained so much of semi-barbarism, that the women painted; men assumed the adjudication of their own wrongs; all wore swords, as well as wigs and cocked hats, from a footman to a lord; and duels were as frequent, and almost as ferocious, as they still are in the less civilised districts of North America.*

* It was the fashion for females, like the male sex, to have prize-fights, and to contest the championship in pitched battles. The indecency of these exhibitions continued far into the next reign; and some curious examples of Amazonian challenges have been collected by a contemporary from the public journals of 1772. "Challenge.—I, Elizabeth Wilkinson of Clerkenwell, having had

Under George II., it was not without danger that people ventured abroad by night or day in the streets of London. In a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated January 31, 1750, Horace Walpole writes, "You will hear little news from England but of robberies. The number of disbanded soldiers and sailors have all taken to the road, or rather to the street. People are almost afraid of stirring after dark." Confederated gangs of villains appear to have long shared the power of the metropolis with the police and magistracy. In April, 1744, a band of desperadoes, to the number of about twenty, attacked St. Martin's Roundhouse in mid-day, armed with cutlasses, bludgeons, and pistols, with the design of rescuing some of their comrades; nor could they be dispersed till a party of the Horse Guards had been sent for. A few months after, an active peace-officer, who had distinguished himself in the pursuit of robbers, was assailed in the open streets by twelve villains, armed with cutlasses and pistols. "The gang," says Maitland, "who committed these robberies, were so insolent, that they went to the houses of peace-officers, made them beg pardon for endeavouring to do their duty, and promise not to molest them."* "How long," says Justice Fielding, in 1751, "have we known highwaymen reign in this kingdom after they have been publicly known for such? Have

some words with Hannah Hyfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me upon the stage, and box me for three guineas; each woman holding half-a-crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops the money to lose the battle. *Answer.*—I, Hannah Hyfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words, desiring home blows, and from her no favour: she may expect a good thumping!" The half-crowns in the hands were an ingenious device to prevent scratching.—*The Quarterly Review.*

* Pictorial History of England, vol. iv. p. 855.

not some of them committed robberies in open daylight, in the sight of many people, and afterwards rode solemnly and triumphantly through the neighbouring towns, without any danger or molestation?" Officers frequently, with warrants in their pockets, passed known rogues without daring to apprehend them, from fear of the vengeance of their confederates. Such open defiance of justice had obviously its chief origin in an inefficient police, an evil long after tolerated, even till an advanced period of the next reign. Severe and frequent punishments were certainly not wanting; for Fielding says, "cart-loads of our fellow-creatures were once in every six weeks carried to slaughter."

The badness of local communication afforded a convenient shelter to delinquency. Turnpikes, which were introduced soon after the Restoration, were erected slowly, in opposition to the prejudices of the people. At Leeds, in Yorkshire, in 1753, was such a furious riot, owing to the erection of turnpikes, that nearly one hundred people were killed and wounded by the military. Early in the reign of George II. it was made felony to pull down a toll-gate. Yet Mr. Chalmers says * the great roads of England remained almost in their ancient condition even in 1754, when the traveller seldom saw a turnpike for two hundred miles after leaving the vicinity of London.

George II. lived to the advanced age of 77, and the 34th year of his reign. His government had been signalised by two wars, neither of very long duration. His first war began with Spain, in 1739, and was without adequate cause. Ostensibly, the protection of British commerce and the vindication of the national honour were the pretexts for hostilities; but these differences might have been amicably adjusted, had not the turbulent spirit of the

* Estimate, p. 125.

people, satiated by the enjoyments of a long peace, been influenced by the artifices of a parliamentary opposition, which saw in the advent of war the downfall of Sir R. Walpole's pacific ministry. The next war was colonial. It began in 1755, about the respective boundaries of France and England in America, and was protracted into the next reign. Although frivolous in origin and disastrous in its early progress, it closed successfully. Canada was conquered from the French, and annexed to England; their settlements in Asia and Africa destroyed, and the foundation of a vast empire laid in the East, by the daring enterprise of Clive, Pocock, Lawrence, Coote, Watson, and other able and intrepid British officers. It was in this contest that England first discovered her strength. Under the prudent ministry of Walpole, her resources had, during a lengthened peace, been steadily accumulating, and now that they were directed by the energies of the first William Pitt, her might was felt in every corner of the globe.

The constitutional events of the period were not of prominent interest. Whig ascendancy continued, and public men were divided only by struggles for power, not the conflicting claims of prerogative and legislation, the boundaries of which had been settled. Parliamentary corruption had become an undisguised element in the government, and still more dangerous to civil liberty was the retention in its services of a body of hireling public writers. For these practices Sir Robert Walpole appears to have been justly reprehensible. Both Mr. Hallam and Lord John Russell admit the corruption of this minister, but the latter doubts whether his government was more so than that of the half century which preceded and that which followed it.* The direct bribery of parliament is sup-

* Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe, vol. ii. p. 472.

posed, by Mr. Hallam, to have continued to the end of the American war.

Both the executive and popular branches of the constitution acquired strength. A standing army in peace of 16,000 men had now become an admitted item of the public establishments. The Scotch rebellion of 1745, and the absurd fears propagated by the press of a descent by the French in flat-bottomed boats, afforded pretexts for the maintenance of this unconstitutional force. The increase of the revenue, and of revenue laws summarily administered, tended still further to augment the influence of the crown. Popular power was strengthened, first, by the passing of a Place Bill, which reduced the enormous number of the dependants of the court in the House of Commons; next, by the publication of the debates. This had begun in the last reign, in Boyer's "Annual Register," and was continued monthly in this in the "Gentleman's Magazine." Being in direct violation of a resolution of the Commons passed in 1729, it was very stealthily ventured upon, and the initials and final letters of the speakers' names only were printed. It was evidently considered a bold experiment, either to report the speeches or reflect on the conduct of public men; for it is observable, in the contemporary "History of England" by Dr. Smollett, that the names are given with similar precautions when the historian comments on the measures or characters of the chief members of the administration.

The commerce of the country continued to increase during this reign, less from the policy of the government than the natural progress of industry, skill, and enterprise. War, which generally obstructs the traffic of nations, had opened new sources of trade to English merchants, by our successes in America and the East

Indies. The superiority of our navy had crushed the navigation of France, our chief rival in commerce; so that England now supplied, on her own terms, all those foreign markets at which she had, during the peace, been undersold by her competitor.

The partial favour shown to agriculture, by a bounty on the exportation of its produce, has been already noticed; rural industry also obtained a great impulse from the inventions and writings of Jethro Tull, on experimental farming. He introduced the drill-husbandry, and recommended the substitution of labour and arrangements in the place of manure and fallowing in the culture of land. A rotation of crops, and the cultivation of turnips, clover, and potatoes became more general. That agriculture was rapidly extending is attested by the course of legislation. In the warlike reign of King William not a single act was passed for the inclosure of wastes. In the equally warlike reign of Queen Anne there were only two inclosure acts; but in that of George I. the number was twenty-six, and in that of George II. 226.

Although the age was not remarkable for originality, the powers of the intellect were in full activity, and abounded in many ingenious and clever writers. Berkeley, Hartley, and Hutcheson excited astonishment by the novelty of their metaphysical researches. In natural philosophy, the phenomena of electricity and magnetism had begun to attract attention. Mathematics were successfully cultivated by Halley, Bradley, Maclaurin, Sanderson, and the two Simpsons. The medical art was elucidated by the writings of Hunter, Pringle, Mead, Huxham, and Monro. In theology were many distinguished names; the Establishment being proud of its Hoadley, Potter, Herring, and Sherlock, and the Dissenters, of Lardner, Doddridge, Watts, and Leland, both

joining battle in defence of their common faith, assailed by the writings of Toland, Woolston, Tindal, and Morgan. History and biography were cultivated by the copious Guthrie, the circumstantial Ralph, the laborious Carte, and the classic Middleton. Upon these in the next reign rose a more brilliant historical constellation, in the illustrious names of Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson. In philology and criticism, Bentley, Warburton, and Boyle were the dazzling meteors. The genius of Cervantes and Le Sage was transfused into the novels of Fielding and Smollett, who painted the characters and ridiculed the follies of life with equal force, wit, and aptitude. Richardson, in his "Pamela" and "Grandison," had the merit of originating a new species of writing, in which works of imagination were sought to be made the vehicle of moral precepts and examples. Young, Thomson, Akenside, Blair, Gray, and Armstrong, in poetry, and Congreve, Gay, Home, and Cibber, in the drama, were the most distinguished celebrities.

Music had become a fashionable study: the Italian opera was encouraged, and concerts formed in every corner of the metropolis. Handel, Arne, Boyce, and Greene were the chief professors. Painting, which had been hitherto little cultivated, now produced some artists of extraordinary merit. Hogarth was unrivalled in exhibiting the scenes of ordinary life, in humour and character. Reynolds and Ramsay were preeminent in portraits; in sculpture, Roubiliac; in engraving, Strange; and in architecture, Burlington.

CHAPTER XXI.

RETROSPECTIVE SUMMARY.

It may not be unadvisable to pause awhile, before entering on the long and chequered vista at which we have arrived. This preliminary deference appears due to the protracted term of its duration, if not to the varied and pregnant events with which it was fraught, or to any signal progressive transition that marked its commencement.

In considering the past, and the prominent changes and occurrences by which its successive phases have been sought to be exemplified, it must be manifest that Great Britain, from a state of barbarism, had, on the accession of George III., attained a high pitch of civilisation, measured by any contemporary or antecedent example in the progress of nations. In such advancement, however, there had been no deviation, any more than in the future that awaited her, from the settled institutes which ordinarily govern the economy of nature. In all progress it is the early stages of existence which are the most onerous, in which the signs of life are most slow, indistinct, and elaborated ; and it is only by the accumulated force thence acquired, that subsequent movements become accelerated. England formed no exception to this law ; her future was great because her past had not been fruitless, but had enabled her to enter on the rich inheritance of wealth and power, laws and institutions, transmitted by the illustrious of preceding generations. Before, however opening this chapter of her career, it

may, I repeat, be fit to recapitulate by name, if not detailed exposition, the leading attributes of the meritorious past that have pioneered the recent and more rapid advances of the empire to preeminence.

Although deeply buried and obscured, like the mosaic pavements of old Rome, the substratum of British civilisation is doubtless due to imperial dominion. The Saxons who succeeded the first invaders were essentially more barbarous than the people they mastered; but they introduced popular institutions, and brought along with them those notions of equal rights which they held in common with all German nations. Our third and final subjugation imparted a still more ample and distinctive share of national benefits. In civilisation the Normans were superior to the Saxons; cultivated a higher learning, and were more advanced in the tasteful and useful arts. Instead of wasting their revenues in sensual indulgences, their pride was to devote a large portion of them to works of preeminent utility or embellishment, to the building of castles, churches, and monasteries. Architecture is considered to have had its rise with them, and it is also probable that to the Normans is due important improvements in agriculture and the extension of commerce. But the paramount gain of the Conquest was unquestionably its political issues, in the consolidation of a number of petty antagonistic states into a powerful kingdom, having one head, one law, one language, and one supreme legislature. A new and united power, of unknown destinies, thus took its place in Europe, distinctly recognisable by the elder nations of the Continent.

Under the Normans, the feudal system culminated; it was a severe form of polity, but not unproductive. It inaugurated order, property, and civil subordination; and

by its banded and resolute instrumentality was extorted the first chartered guarantee of legal and constitutional immunities. Even the sequel, or final catastrophe of baronial sway, is to be rejoiced over ; for when the territorial lords, by their wars and vices, had mutually enfeebled and almost annihilated each other, an opening was left for strengthening the monarchy, by which more equal justice, security, and peace were obtained for all, and for the rise of the middle classes into an influential element of the community. The Protestant Reformation was a mighty gain both in its moral and material issues, by not only affording greater freedom of thought and discussion, but by animating industry, and unfettering from the monopolising grasp of a degenerate priesthood the physical resources of the kingdom. It was a crowning triumph of the Tudors, and which, seconded by their wise and vigorous political administration, gave such scope and impulse in every direction as enabled England eventually to take the foremost place, which she did not then possess, among European nations. If the shock of the civil wars of the Commonwealth left no abiding results, it was chiefly because the seventeenth century was unprepared for the popular concessions prematurely sought to be realised. But this convulsion was not repressive ; it did not arrest commercial progress, but laid the foundation of our maritime power ; was fruitful in lessons of political wisdom ; infused energy and enterprise through every class ; promoted inquiry, if it generated extravagance ; and was beneficial to the national character abroad, by the eminent example it afforded of fearless independence, stern justice, and individual heroism. Even the prize for which the parliamentarians contended, with the wild zeal and inordinate anticipation of beginners in reforms, was not wholly lost — only postponed to the next generation,

when, in the triumphant revolution of 1688, the royal prerogatives were definitely circumscribed and the constitution settled on as wide a basis as was probably then safe, practicable, or sought by any primary or leading interest of the realm.

For all these acquisitions, for all these noble services of our ancestors, to what class or special sacrifice shall we say the present age owes the largest debt of gratitude? I shall endeavour to open this inquiry. The ascription of merit or influence appears mainly referable to two sources—to the public spirit of the governing or educated classes, and to the rise of the intermediate or commercial orders of the community.

To the iron barons of old justly pertains the boon of the Great Charter, but in the achievement of this security the clergy threw their weight into the scale of justice. The names of Archbishop Langton and other prelates appear conspicuously on the face of this famous instrument. Indeed, the religious teachers of the people had contributed efficient aid in the early stages of progress; they had helped even to soften the ruthless tyranny of the barons, who now claimed concessions from the sovereign, and they had been the first to open the crusade against slavery. Personal bondage is manifestly inconsistent with the principle of human equality, which Christianity inculcates; and this has really constituted the most active element of emancipation, both to whites and blacks, in the long period that has elapsed subsequent to the classic ages. Its truths had penetrated the depths of society in the baronial age, and from the practical and more popular preachings of the Wickliffites formed the stirring sedition which appealed to the followers of Cade and Wat Tyler. The vassal insurrectionists certainly reaped no immediate advantage from their movement, but they promulgated

the new doctrine in a menacing attitude ; and this is mostly all that can be done by the forlorn hope in the initiation of any great political or social innovation. To the same primal source may be traced the next great impulse, and the powerful and educated continued to be the moving power ; the masses were either hostile, or too impotent or ignoble in status, to take a part ; and while the potent John of Gaunt with his mighty ægis had sheltered the early germs of reformation sown by the Lollards, both in theology and politics, it was Henry VIII. and his ministers who openly made the first successful resistance to the Popedom. But in the great struggle that next ensued, a new element of power was openly manifested — the Middle or Productive Classes appeared in overwhelming force ; triumphed heroically over despotism ; but, incompetent to frame a rational or abiding substitute in place of the monarchy they had subverted, they speedily succumbed to the daring wiles of an usurper. This failure again brought out the Aristocracy of society, and the unfinished work of the Commonwealth men was taken up and consummated in a permanent form by the patrician revolutionists of 1688.

So that, up to this period, progress appears to have been less attributable to the people than to their rulers, who encouraged and directed public advances. The fruits of their guidance were, a limited monarchy, popular representation, religious liberty, equal laws, with the other constitutional provisos of the Bill of Rights, and the scope of which may be comprised in one significant expression — namely, freedom to all, rulers and ruled, but coupled with responsibility. These were undoubtedly great blessings, but do not comprise the entire elements of British civilisation. Beside the moral and political agencies that have been indicated, certain material forces

have been in constant operation, and which, perhaps in a still greater degree, have conduced to the grandeur of England. In plain words, these are her unequalled riches, her commerce, manufactures, and industry; but with these the claims of the Productive Orders are almost exclusively identified; they are veritably an impersonation of them. It would be idle to dilate on their advantages. With commerce alone are associated inestimable gifts—luxuries and the elegant arts for the affluent, necessities and enjoyments for the poor. Our civilisation may be almost said to have begun with industrial prosperity. The patrician classes, to whom so much has been accredited, were really reclaimed by it, and from mediæval barbarism elevated into that refined, intelligent, and useful sphere of social existence which made them both the ornament and benefactors of the country.

If we seek to trace the foundation of the national strength, what do we find? Our sea-girt isle is a popular theme of exultation, and with reason. Our insular position in the Atlantic, and extended coast-line, indented with noble tidal rivers, are enviable superiorities; but the ocean would not alone have sufficed for our security. Naturally, it is the general pathway to enemies as well as friends, and formed, in truth, the common highway over which the Romans, Saxons, and Normans, in succession, achieved our subjugation. Impregnability to foreign aggression, then, has not been wholly due to our geographical situation, but is only coeval with the rise of our naval bulwarks. Maritime power, however, is based on commerce, and on the colonial enterprise which the spirit of commerce tends to foster. Another issue, still more important, may be traced to the same source. British society may, perhaps with some plausibility, arrogate to itself certain distinctions in the ex-

ercise of the prudential virtues—in moral order, forethought, and economy; but assuredly, if such national characteristics exist, they may as certainly be attributed to our predominant mercantile pursuits as to Protestantism or the rivalry of Nonconformity. As this is a consideration in favour of industry which hardly appears to have obtained due appreciation, it may admit of more full elucidation.

It is observable that almost every class of every community has its special and distinctive traits. With the higher, we are wont to associate greater truthfulness, honour, frankness, courtesy, and independence of conduct. The industrial classes cultivate the humbler virtues of the ethical code, and are more exemplary for the integrity, perseverance, frugality, and decorum of their lives. These qualities are really indispensable to success; without them there cannot be successful progress either in trade, professions, or operative arts. Allowing this, and allowing that commerce and industry have really been the foundation of our public preeminence, it is impossible to overestimate the vast influence such qualities have exercised over the development of the community. Punctuality in engagements, oneness of purpose, justice and moderation in our aims, with enterprise, firmness, and caution in our pursuits, undoubtedly constitute the accredited attributes of the English name. They have fought our battles, supported us in every trial, and in every struggle, often with hope deferred, have conducted to victory. Like the impalpable heat of nature, they have silently but gradually permeated everywhere—every class, from the patrician to the plebeian, every institution, and every great reformation. They limited the Monarchy, but did not finally subvert it; they reformed the Commons, but preserved the Peerage; they struck down Antichrist,

but cherished the ancient Anglican church which St. Augustine had planted. They have, in short, fashioned the national career, its pervading character, public opinion, general policy, domestic manners, habits, and usages. The latent or prostrate interests of society have been quickened into life or made buoyant by their influence. This is strictly applicable to Agriculture. At the close of the Plantagenet and baronial wars, this staple interest of the community had fallen into neglect, and the entire kingdom was only saved from desolation by the able policy, rural and commercial, initiated by the first Tudors.

However, there is a danger of falling into extravagance, in dwelling only on the bright side of so seductive a theme. The pursuits of commerce and manufactures have not been without their drawbacks. Of these deductions, religious divisions, inebriety, and the pauperism and crimes of our cities and towns are not the least considerable. If not devoted to commerce themselves, the governing classes cannot be said to have been adverse to its progress, but have honoured it, and sought to render it more liberal in spirit by abating the tendency to monopoly to which mere trade is prone. The illustrious family of the Greshams, who may be reckoned among the earliest of our merchant-princes, were objects of special distinction from the greatest of our sovereigns. Under the Stuarts, the advantages of trade and the useful arts had become so apparent that they had almost ceased to be degrading. The change of manners they had wrought, and the intermixture of the higher and middle ranks by marriages, induced the gentry, and even the younger branches of the nobility, Mr. Chalmers says, "to bind their sons apprentices to merchants, and thereby shed lustre on pursuits before deemed only gainful; to invigorate traffic by their greater capitals, or to extend

its operation by superior knowledge and connection with powerful interests." This spirit continued uninterruptedly to operate to a much later period, until, either by family alliances or elevation, the number of those whose honours were due to the accumulation of riches by trade began to form a considerable numerical proportion of the Peerage.

The attribution of merit in the rearing of the fabric of our national greatness seems hardly to call for further elucidation. It is not a single but a joint production. No party, class, nor individual, can arrogate the exclusive distinction. All have concurred, and our progress is the slow result of united and accumulated efforts. England has had no Solon nor Lycurgus to found and rear the superstructure of her laws and institutions; no single warrior has stretched her territorial limits round the globe; nor has any moral teacher at once struck out the forms and obligations of private life. All, as I have elsewhere observed, has been gradual; native, not incorporated or transplanted in maturity from others, but the growth of the soil during ages; the offspring less of genius than of protracted agency and long-continued experimental efforts. Essentially, the nation has been its own architect; has been less remarkable for the production of single persons of surpassing power in arts, arms, or statesmanship, than for the spontaneous growth of average capabilities exceeding in the aggregate those of neighbouring kingdoms. But though perhaps it may be necessary to concede that the lone stars of intellect which have risen amongst us may have been few in number, they have been of matchless force and lustre; and the names of Bacon, Newton, Shakspeare, Milton, and Locke may be justly held equal, if not superior, to the brightest luminaries of any other age or country. :

British civilisation, it may be further observed, eminent as it may be, is in some directions more derivative than original, and of later growth than in continental countries. For this following of neighbouring states, the reasons are not difficult to assign. Our island was doubtless first peopled at a later period than the continent, and at a later period, and for a shorter term received and had the benefit of Roman example, laws, and institutions. After the Romans followed the long turbulent era of the Anglo-Saxons ; these troubles were healed by the Conquest, but not without entailing fresh distractions. The Norman chieftains, who had shared England among them, also held possessions in France, and hence arose a fierce and protracted struggle for the phantom crown of that kingdom. These ended in the entire expulsion of the English from the French soil ; apparently a national reverse, but truly a great gain to England. Its fruits, however, were not immediately reaped. Without an external enemy to combat, the barons quarrelled among themselves ; and it was only at the close of the sanguinary strife between the Houses of York and Lancaster, in 1485, that England began to breathe in peace. She had then everything to learn or to establish in commerce, manufactures, navigation, and the arts. She proved an eager and apt scholar, as has been depicted on a former occasion (Chapter XV.) : and having thus briefly described or recapitulated the chief steps in British advances up to the present, the memorable reign of George III. may be more fitly entered upon.

CHAPTER XXII.

ACCESSION OF GEORGE III.

Relations of the Crown and Aristocracy.—Lord Bute's Scheme of Court Government.—Lord North's Ministry, and Disappointment of the Factions.—Junius, and recent Disclosures.—Constitutional Progress.—General Warrants, Publicity of Parliamentary Debates, and the Irresponsible Power acquired by the Press.—Edmund Burke, and the Position of Political Aspirants.

THE Revolution of 1688 had effected an entire change in one of the chief elements of the government. It had divested the crown of its feudal character and pretensions, and left it more nominal than real in its control over the other constituents of the state. In compassing this transition, its authors had evinced a respect for the rights of the people, in common with the interests of their own order, and were especially mindful of a final settlement of the disputed prerogatives which for a century had been in issue between the Commons and the sovereign. So much justice and forethought manifested a correct appreciation of the juncture in which they were placed, a disposition to profit by experience, and prudent regard to future contingencies. Higher merits than these it is not easy to conceive, and it is likely posterity will not begrudge them to the constructive statesmen of the Revolution.

Still the system they introduced was experimental. Both the men who invited the Prince of Orange to the vacant throne, and the prince himself, stood in untried relations. William III. was only the nominee of a

coterie until his regal position had been defined by the Convention Parliament ; and after this settlement had been made, arose uncertainties as to the tenure of the executive power. Was the king to be free to choose his ministers, or was he to accept, from gratitude if not policy or constitutional right, for his servants those who had raised him to the throne ? United by a common interest with William III., the revolution patriots were obviously the most eligible for his first ministers ; and such they became. Unfortunately they soon quarrelled among themselves, either from misgiving as to the course they had pursued, personal jealousies, or dissatisfaction with their-official appointments. Instead of being the king of a united people, William soon found himself only at the head of rival factions, with whose cooperation in any form of combination it was difficult to carry on the government. Whig ministers were tried and Tory ministers were tried, and next a mixture of the two were balanced against each other ; but no variety of combination was able to effect a cordial union of a composite cabinet. The difficulties experienced in the formation of a stable administration descended to Queen Anne. But the great war King William had bequeathed to the queen, gave unchallenged ascendancy to the Marlboroughs till towards the close of her reign. On the death of Anne, the promptitude of the Whigs in securing the Protestant succession, and frustrating the intrigues of the Jacobites to effect a restoration of the Stuarts, established lasting claims of gratitude in the family of Hanover. Consequently the leading members of this party became almost uninterrupted the ministers of the crown during the next two reigns.

From the German character and predilections of the first two Georges, they took little interest in English

affairs, further than rendering them subservient to those of their electoral dominions ; and the Whigs, by carefully ministering to these continental preferences, carried on the government with hardly any interference from royalty. George I. and his successor were content to be little more than ciphers in the government ; ministers governed both king and people, responsible only to a majority of their party in parliament. The usual results of unchecked authority followed : from servants the ministers became masters, and from masters tyrants over the sovereign.

These were precisely the relations in which the superior elements of the government stood on the accession of George III. The aristocracy had saved the constitution and settled it, but had usurped the royal prerogatives, quarrelled over the spoil, and put the sovereign in bonds. The emancipation of the crown therefore from an oppressive and often capricious thraldom, formed the first act of the new reign.

Many circumstances were in favour of the attempt. Dynastic fears from a rival house had ceased, and the Brunswick family had become less dependent on the support of a party. The king himself appeared before the public under prepossessing indications. His life had been retired ; all that was known of him was creditable ; his manners were free and popular *, and he was too young to have formed binding ties with any section of politicians. Unlike his predecessors he was not an alien, but an Englishman, and English in his tastes, partial to rural

* "For the king himself, he seems all good nature, wishing to satisfy everybody : all his speeches are obliging.—I saw him, afterwards, on the throne, where he is graceful and genteel, sits with dignity, and reads his answers to addresses well."—*Lord Orford's Works*, vol. vi. p. 222.

life, and preferring a decorous marriage to the license of concubinage.* Moreover, the people were not likely to be adverse to a system that held out a prospect of a more abiding form of administration. Changes of ministers, or endeavours to effect them, formed the staple political engrossment; and the country, from the unsettled character of its executive power, had suffered the evils of an elective monarchy, with this aggravation, that they were of more frequent occurrence than when dependent on the life of the prince. In struggles for power public men had professed popular maxims, which they belied immediately they had served their temporary purpose. Nepotism or ambition, not to serve the king or country, seemed the main object of strife: and this was not the course of subalterns only but the chiefs of party; Walpole and Pulteney, down to Chatham and Camden, pursuing the like vacillating round, first of patriotism, and, when that had served its turn, graduating from the political arena as courtly placemen or pensioned peers.

A change therefore might be an amendment. The fiat of the monarch might be a less evil than the venal distractions of faction. But the experiment entirely failed. The Earl of Bute, who, in concert with the king's mother, is supposed to have been the author, and

* The first Lord Holland sought to convert into political capital the king's partiality to a country life. Although George III. never had a mistress, he had attachments; his first love being Lady Sarah Lennox, whose eldest sister Mr. Fox had married. It would have been a great point gained by Fox to have his sister-in-law near the throne, and he would not have scrupled about terms. But his rustic *ruse* failed; though Lady Sarah appeared every morning in the fields of Holland House, close to the great road where the king passed, "in a fancy habit making hay."—*Walpole's Memoirs of George III.*, vol. iv. p. 64.

who undertook the initiation of the new scheme, was unqualified for the undertaking. He was without political influence or connection ; had no parliamentary abilities or interest ; his principles were arbitrary ; his manners cold, haughty, and pedantic ; and he was only known to the public as the personal favourite or confidential adviser of the princess dowager of Wales. That the nobility could be driven from their standing near the throne by such impotent agency it augured great presumption or want of capacity in the projectors to expect. The bare effort seems to have excited as much contempt as indignation, and the heads of the political clans united as promptly against the Scottish parvenu as the barons against Mortimer or the Spencers under Edward II. The time, too, for this *coup d'etat* was unsuitable. The ministry with which the reign had begun happened to be a united and able one ; the country was highly prosperous, and a successful war was on the eve of conclusion.

So far as the new scheme of government was developed under Lord Bute's short-lived ministry, it appeared to be an attempt to revive the leading principles of Sir Robert Walpole's administration. The haste with which the peace was concluded evinced that his lordship inclined to a pacific and nonintervention foreign policy. At home public opinion was to be moulded by a hired press and the legislature by corruption. The king was to be free to "go alone ;" that he should choose his ministers as the royal pleasure or palace favouritism dictated, independent of popular or parliamentary control. No support seems to have been sought or intended from party combinations ; and in this the course of Bute differed from that of Walpole, who was always ready to buy off or attach to himself political leaders. In short, Bute contemplated the introduction of a narrow scheme

of arbitrary power, in which he himself was to exercise a kind of *maire du palais* direction. It held out no invitation to popular support, afforded no wider guarantee against the abuse of the executive or legislative authorities. For the despotism of the aristocracy he sought to substitute the despotism of the sovereign ; for the intrigues and scrambles of faction the intrigues and scrambles of courtiers.

The failure of Lord Bute's plan of close government had the usual consequence of failures — it made matters worse than before. After his retirement the king was left entirely at the mercy of the factions ; and great difficulty was experienced in forming a ministry. A principal cause of this perplexity was the limited number of offices in the gift of the crown : there being only one premiership and a definite number of secretaryships, &c., at the king's disposal, they were often insufficient to satisfy the several leaders and their followers. Consequently they quarrelled about the division of the prime parts or the appropriation of the rest ; the discontented refused to cooperate with their more fortunate rivals, withheld their parliamentary support, cavilled at their measures, exaggerated to the people their defects, represented the court to be swayed by an imaginary secret influence ; and by the aid of the press, pamphleteering, and other annoyances, never ceased to thwart or oppose till the obnoxious ministry had been overthrown. It was in this manner Mr. Pitt opened a way for his own elevation, by keeping aloof from the Rockingham ministry ; and the followers of this nobleman destroyed the second ministry of Pitt by retaliating upon him his own political strategy.

The main topic of the united attack on the Earl of Bute was the Peace concluded under his ministry in 1763. But the peace was more advantageous to England than

to any of the belligerents, and a needful one to all of them. It closed the famous Seven Years' War, which had cost some millions of human lives, devastated no inconsiderable part of Europe, and carried carnage into the four quarters of the globe. It was objected against the Duke of Bedford's pacific treaty that we had not retained sufficient of our conquests; that more sugar islands ought to have been kept, and that the logwood cutters in Honduras ought to have been better secured against the Spaniards; but it is questionable whether we had not been too retentive, and unduly extended national protection and expenditure without coadequate advantages. Canada, Louisiana, and Florida became ours; some of the principal West Indian islands, and Senegal in Africa. In the East the foundation of our renown and dominion had been laid by the victories of Clive, Munro, and other energetic commanders. The British empire was in fact established in almost its remotest territorial limits, and a wide field opened for internal industry and commercial enterprise.

It is a remarkable feature of the party dissensions of the period, that they were kept up by men of the same political creed. The Tories had only held power for short intervals since the revolution, and not once since the accession of the Hanover family. The Whigs had the government exclusively to themselves, and the several sections into which they were divided were agreed upon all great constitutional questions — upon all questions of foreign policy; upon the support of the Church establishment and the toleration of the Dissenters; in short, upon all fundamental points, and differed only on the allocation of offices and emoluments. Their quarrels from this cause produced unceasing official mutations; and in the first decade of the king's reign

there were seven distinct administrations. The reign began with the virtual premiership of Mr. Pitt, and was succeeded by that of Lord Bute, Mr. George Grenville, and the Marquis of Rockingham. The second ministry of Mr. Pitt, then Earl of Chatham, followed, but it was very inferior in lustre to the first. He lost his popularity with the people by the acceptance of a peerage and pension; and his powerful friends had been alienated by his ambitious wiles to supersede his predecessor. He was succeeded, after the accustomed interlude of royal closetings, offers, and rejections, by the Duke of Grafton, who held office till the beginning of 1770. It was a perturbed interval, from the serious aspect American affairs had assumed, and an undignified struggle between the legislature and a clever but unscrupulous adventurer. Parliament, in particular, created general dissatisfaction from the Commons, in their eagerness to exclude Mr. Wilkes, infringing the rights of constituents in the choice of their representatives. In the midst of this struggle, Chatham, after a mysterious syncope of two years' duration, reappeared; and though the duke was his avowed disciple, he did not scruple to place himself in the foremost rank of opposition, seizing every popular topic of excitement, and flaming away in the full bloom of juvenile patriotism. Public discontent was further augmented by the powerful pen of Junius, who, at this time, attracted attention, and assailed with unscrupulous bitterness the Grafton ministry. The duke's embarrassments were consummated by the conduct of Lord Chancellor Camden, who voted against him on the ministerial address, and which appears to have been the immediate cause of his grace's resignation. It was followed by the ministry of Lord North, which subsisted twelve years, and terminated the struggles of the revolution families for ascendancy. By North's

elevation the Whigs lost the monopoly of power, which they did not recover till sixty years after; and the Tories—some of whom, from Jacobite sympathies, had long pined under the cold shade of the Protestant settlement—gradually assumed that ascendancy in the royal councils for which, from passive loyalty, unchangeableness, and courtly subserviency, they seemed more aptly suited than their rivals.

Thus the aristocratical pressure which the king had vainly sought to remove at the beginning of his reign, was quietly removed by the course of events. Popular excitement subsided, and an entire change came over the public mind. The reasons for this quietude are not difficult to assign. The sources of dissension had been less national than individual. Upon the great question of taxing the American colonies there was little discrepancy of opinion either in the court, the legislature, or the community: the affair of Wilkes was too weak in its personal representative to be long maintainable. It was the rivalries of persons or sectional factions, not the conflict of public interests, which had mainly kept alive the turmoil of the preceding twelve years. By the appointment of a new man to the head of the Treasury the apple of discord was abstracted; and Chatham, the Grenvilles, Rockingham, and Bedford appear to have been less mortified at the award of this prize to a stranger to their feuds than to one of themselves. Attempts were made to keep up national discontents by procuring addresses and remonstrances to the throne, especially from the city of London; but these missiles were adroitly parried by an improved demeanour at St. James's, being received with dignified silence or a gentle rebuke, by which happy union of temper and firmness the public mind was tranquillised and even conciliated.

These were mild sedatives certainly to administer, but they were commensurate to the malady, which was cutaneous rather than organic. The final aim of the anti-ministerialists had been to wreak their vengeance on Grafton and Bedford by displacing them, and raising Chatham a third time to the head of the government; but the adroit move of appointing the good-humoured North to the head of the Treasury very unexpectedly disconcerted the Chatham-Grenvillite brotherhood. Except in amiabilities, the new minister was entirely indebted to fortune for his promotion. He had neither influence with the nobility nor popularity with the people. He had rendered no public services, and had no high claims either of person, principles, or manners. He was in his thirty-eighth year; very fat, coarse, and clumsy in figure. Walpole says he had the "air of a blind trumpeter,"* having a wide mouth, thick lips, inflated visage, and two large protuberant eyes, which rolled about to no purpose, for he was very short-sighted. His voice was untuneable, his dress slovenly, his behaviour rough and uncivil. Colonel Barre thought so meanly of him that he at first disdained to notice him in his new capacity. But North had negative qualities, and some useful ones. The king liked him, because he was tractable and unconnected with faction. Failures did not discourage him; his temper was genial and unruffled. He had wit, good natural sense, assurance, and quickness both of conception and elocution.

For two years previously Lord North had been chancellor of the exchequer, and his elevation was the only change of consequence in the administration. His uncle, the Earl of Halifax, as lord privy seal, was the only new name introduced into the cabinet: in the subordinate

* *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.*, vol. iv. p. 78.

places of government the changes were few ; but from weariness or loss of hope the ardour of opposition abated — became lukewarm or divided both in the city of London, the clubs, and the press. Pamphlets and the newspapers had been the chief agency in the agitation. Earl Temple, the brother-in-law of Chatham, was an amateur public writer, and profuse contributor to the press of party hints and intelligence ; Wilkes was a forcible but scurrilous author ; and Junius it is needless to depict. The last-named was among the disappointed seceders from the political arena shortly after the formation of the new ministry, and respecting whom it would now be idle to affect any mystery. Lord Brougham, Lord Mahon, Mr. Macaulay, and almost every writer of eminence who has applied himself to the investigation of the question or to the history of the period, concur in fixing on Sir Philip Francis the authorship of the "Letters." As considerable light has been thrown on the subject by recent publications, a brief advertence to the history and discovery of the writer of these celebrated political effusions may not be misplaced.

Since the publication of the "Chatham Correspondence" and the "Grenville Letters" it appears Junius addressed private notes both to Mr. George Grenville and the Earl of Chatham. They are not of great importance, further than evincing the desire of the writer to obtain the notice of these statesmen, or to apprise them that he was in a position to assist them with his pen or means of information. With his second letter to Lord Chatham he also sent proof sheets of those addressed to Lord Chief Justice Mansfield and Lord Camden, and which appeared in the "Public Advertiser," January 21. 1772 : they were the last efforts of Junius in that channel of publicity. Whether Junius was at this time personally known to the Earl of Chatham, or became so subsequently,

I am uncertain ; but that Chatham did become acquainted with him, and aided him with materials for some of his philippics against his opponents, I have the written testimony of Lady Francis for affirming. The other parties who became privy to the secret, appear to have been the king and his minister Lord North, from whom Francis received his valuable appointment in the East Indies.

The main reason why Sir Philip Francis so long escaped suspicion was doubtless the obscurity of his position at the time the "Letters of Junius" first appeared. He was then a clerk in the War Office, unknown as a public writer, and none thought of fixing on so obscure and undistinguished a person as the author of such masterly compositions. Junius himself dexterously aided this misleading, insinuating that he was stricken in years, portly in person, affluent, and at the least of patrician dignity. The mask took admirably, put all investigators for half a century on a wrong scent, and its success for so lengthened a period is really the most marvellous incident connected with the history of the "Letters of Junius."

The foundation of the discovery was laid by Mr. Woodfall's edition of the "Letters," in 1812. In that edition, "Miscellaneous Letter," No. 110., a name appeared, the name of one likely to be personally interested in the subject of some of the strictures of Junius ; that person had been a contemporary with Junius, still lived, was an eminent public character, and of considerable literary abilities. Upon this person Mr. Taylor, in his "Junius Identified," published in 1818, fixed, dragged him out, and, by an able sequence of corroborative evidence, proved him to be the long-sought Junius.*

* This was Mr. Taylor's second attempt. In a previous publication of 1813 he had fixed on the elder Francis. Dr. Philip Francis, the father of Sir Philip, was not without claims to the authorship.

All, however, were not satisfied, and some links in the chain of testimony appeared to be wanting. These I have endeavoured to supply, in an Essay prefixed to Mr. Bohn's edition of the "Letters;" and, assisted by the "Chatham Papers," private communications from Lady Francis and the descendants of Sir Philip Francis, have sought to perfect the demonstration.

The chief points which Mr. Taylor had left incomplete were the competence of Sir P. Francis to the task of Junius; his sources of intelligence; his evasive denials of the authorship of the "Letters"; his Indian retirement, and compact of secrecy with Lord North; the different style and character of Francis's later public writings; and the motives that enforced upon him his fictitious presentment to the public in the first instance, and the obligations of honour, future ease, party and social connections, which afterwards bound him to preserve inviolate the secrets of his earlier career. Beyond the elucidation of these obscurities, I believe nothing further remained to be proved or discovered. The fact, which I first published, that Sir Philip in 1787 got back the Calcraft papers and destroyed them, doubtless closed one important source of verification; but any deficiency of proof from this precaution of Francis has been amply filled up by later intelligence.* With

He was a distinguished classical scholar, active political writer, and the chaplain of the first Lord Holland, the confidential adviser of George III. in the early period of his reign. The younger Francis Mr. Taylor had mistakenly inferred to be a minor; but discovering that he was ten years older than he had at first been led to believe, he revised his inquiry, and soon found that, from superior abilities, his position in the War Office, and remarkable character and personal history, he was more adequate to fulfil all the requirements of the Junian mystery.

* Bohn's edition of the Letters of Junius, 1850. Essay, vol. ii. p. 69. This edition is a reprint of Woodfall's edition of 1812, with many additions.

Mr. Calcraft, the confidential political agent of the Earl of Chatham, and his father Dr. Francis, in an intimate companionship with Lord Holland, young Francis enjoyed those ready and ample sources of intelligence regarding the court, the legislature, city politics, and public characters which astonished his contemporaries. The other points of mystery I flatter myself have not been less satisfactorily unravelled in the *Essay* referred to.

I must beg the reader's pardon for this digression. I have been led into it from previous devotion to an interesting topic, and from the light it throws on the secret history of the period under notice. The public, I believe, were not before fully aware of the liaisons of the "Great Commoner" with the world-renowned Junius, and of the uses to which Lord Chatham condescended to make an anonymous libeller subservient in his clandestine war against the Grafton-Bedford ministry.* It has also some bearing on the history of the newspaper press, which was now on the eve of achieving one of its greatest triumphs. At the time Junius appeared, there were none of those leading articles or elaborate commentaries on public questions which now occupy so commanding a place in the journals. Essays were occasionally inserted on abstract politics, but voluntary contributors were the writers who really grappled with the stirring questions of the day, and whose communications bore any resem-

* Chatham was little scrupulous about means to attain his political ends, and Junius, as I have found from later disclosures, was not his only auxiliary. Calcraft, who assisted him with loans before Lord Mansfield awarded him the Pynsent estate, was one of his active agents; and to keep alive his influence in the city, he kept up a correspondence with Alderman Beckford. The day before the alderman died, Walpole states that Chatham "forced himself into the house, and got away all the letters he had written to that demagogue."—*Memoirs of George III.*, vol. iv. p. 157.

blance to existing leaders. As reports of the debates were not permitted, members of parliament suffered equally with the public, in possessing no common channel by which one could learn, and the other convey, their sentiments. For obviating the inconveniences of this restrictive system, the influential members of all parties were compelled to resort to the journals for the promulgation of their opinions, and which gave a value and an interest to newspaper correspondence which it no longer possesses.

Early in 1771 this antecedent phase of journalism passed away ; the doors of parliament were thrown open, and newspapers were allowed daily to report the debates of the Commons, with the real and full names of the members affixed. It was a freedom long battled for by the press, and very reluctantly granted by parliament ; and probably neither party at the time adequately appreciated the very great importance of the concession. It was the foundation of the "Fourth Estate," and threw a weight into the popular scale, greater and perhaps more salutary than any extension of the electoral suffrage could have done. But it had one signal drawback. While members of parliament, the government, public men of every class, even private persons and civil society generally, were made amenable to the new jurisdiction, the jurisdiction itself was left an unchartered libertine. All were made responsible except the new authority itself, which was left free from direct liability in consequence of its anonymous agency. It was the establishment of a secret tribunal ; a committee of vigilance or public safety always sitting, with no vacations, eyes everywhere, and powers over all ; and under very little restraint or liberty of appeal from its censures and judgments. This was doubtless a serious Despotism for the community to admit into its bosom. True, there was

the law of libel to appeal to ; but justice from this source is mostly justice with a penalty annexed. Besides, juries, cotemporary with the great power acquired by the press, had begun to evince a reluctance to find verdicts against its transgressions. They brought in a sort of negative verdict, as in Woodfall's trial (Jan. 13. 1770) for publishing Junius's letter to the king, and which finally issued at a later period in conceding by statute full power to juries to judge both of the law and fact in prosecutions for libel.

Although it pertains to a later period, it may be here remarked that the Libel Act of Lord Campbell, the 6 & 7 Vict. c. 96., has materially improved the relations between the press and the community. Under this statute, while private persons have obtained better securities against calumnious aspersions, a wider and more clearly defined freedom has been guaranteed to writers for the fair and truthful discussion both of public questions and private conduct.

Public liberties gained much during the perturbed era of Junius. Jealous and divided as the leaders of parties might be, they were all firm in the maintenance of the constitutional guarantees of the Revolution. The deathblow dealt to general warrants—that is, warrants of personal arrest, without the insertion of the names of the accused—evinced a vigilant determination to protect the liberty of the subject. Neither were they less watchful against prerogative claims, and the embargo imposed on the export of corn by an order in council was subject to a sharp challenge in the Commons, and only protected by a bill of indemnity. There was also merit of another kind in one of the fleeting ministries of the day, namely, the Rockingham, which had the grace to retire, after serving king and country one year and twenty days, without bargaining for place, pension, or reversion ! It

was only with the Tory ministry of Lord North that an antagonistic spirit began to be prurient, and which accumulated great strength from the augmented influence of the crown, consequent on hostilities with the colonies, seconded by the maritime powers of the continent.

The North ministry, from its Tory complexion, tended to render the severance of parties more distinctive. The Whigs, as previously observed, under the Brunswick family had been the sole militant class in the state, and they were divided only in respect of public offices. Under this monopoly of power it became unimportant to a person of talent and ambition to which political section of this party he attached himself. Difference of principle there was none to determine him — only personal predilections, or chance of employment. Mr. Burke allied himself to the Rockingham Whigs, and, as secretary to the marquis, his diversified abilities were called into full activity. He became the chief thinker of his patrons; his patrician employers filled the high offices and the public eye; they gave winged utterance to his thoughts, and led the battle in the open field; but it was Burke that conceived and planned their movements. Not that his noble friends were incapable; but their birth, fortune, and hereditary renown naturally prescribed for them a more ostensible vocation than the obscure mental drudgery of their unknown associate. That this was the relation in which the parties stood appears from the "Correspondence of Burke," edited by Earl Fitzwilliam. Burke was the head of the *etat major*; arranged the campaign, drew up the general orders, protests, motions, and declarations, and all the leaders resorted to his bureau for instruction. His labours were immense, but he was amply remunerated by the "dignified phantom," as Walpole terms him, that he

served. The second Mr. Pitt was near enlisting under the same banner ; at the outset he sought, by the favour of Lord Rockingham, a seat for Cambridge*, and so would have been, had he succeeded in his overture, a follower of Mr. Fox instead of his opponent. In this there would have been no compromise of principle ; as a son of Chatham, from enlargement of mind and progressive tendencies, Mr. Pitt must be ranked among liberal statesmen. Indeed, antecedent to the French revolution, hardly any other noticeable party existed ; the Jacobite Tories, in any force, had not bent their stiff necks to the Hanoverian sceptre, and continued obdurate in the old ways ; but all that were eminent or influential in their avowed principles, politicians or public writers, were favourable to progress.

CHAPTER XXIII.

-GEORGE III.—REVOLT OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

Principles of Colonial Policy.—Mistaken Apprehensions from the Severance of the American Colonies.—Origin of the Question of Parliamentary Reform.—Effects of the Anti-Catholic Riots of the Protestant Association.—Commencement of Concessions to Ireland ; Removal of Restrictions on her Commerce.—Cry in Dublin for “Free Trade” and the Abolition of Obstructions to Irish Industry.

THE colonies and foreign dependencies of States have originated in various causes—political, penal, moral, and economical. Sometimes ambition prompted a state to seek more extended rule, or, it might be, impelled it in the same course in the vindication of national wrongs, and

* The Quarterly Review, Sept. 1855, p. 528.

the necessity of obtaining better security for its people, its commerce, and independence. Frequently external acquisitions have had their source in domestic strife and anarchy, in religious dissensions and persecution, in the thirst for gold, in the need of a remote settlement for the reception of criminals, or in the wants and natural desires of mankind to multiply their means of comfort and enjoyment. In the numerous colonies and vast territorial dependencies of Great Britain, all these different modes of acquirement have been in active operation ; but the last, which originate in the exigencies and laudable efforts of a nation to improve its condition, form undoubtedly the most allowable and defensible pretexts for an extension of external dominion.

A community is overpeopled ; it is oppressed by superfluous wealth and industry ; or it may be distracted by irreconcilable internal divisions : what resort, under these disturbing influences, is more likely to afford relief than to *plant out*—for the unhappy to seek new and quieter homes, and the unemployed and superopulent new fields for the exercise of their industry and the productive investment of capital ?

Colonisation on these principles has the same foundation as the domestic usages of civil life. It is only the state following the example of individuals in their private relations. A family is large ; it is inconvenienced by the number, adolescence, or restlessness of its members. They marry, or seek new homes ; that is *domestic colonisation*, by which the paternal hearth is relieved, and all who belonged to it probably made happier. National colonisation has similar beneficial results ; it tends to the relief of the mother-country, and to the creation and increase of independent states, as the marriages and severance of the members of a family do of individuals.

Both originate in the laws and exigencies of nature; and, under ordinary circumstances, both tend in like manner to the advancement of human felicity.

The United States of North America have practically exemplified all that is here sought to be explained. Through all the vicissitudes of their history, whether dependent or free, they have been a source of benefit to England. By their first settlement the parent state was relieved; they were an outlet for its political and religious discontents, and opened a new and boundless field of industrial enterprise. The rupture of their allegiance neither destroyed nor impaired the salutary relations previously subsisting, but augmented and accelerated their development. The wrong, if any was attempted on either side,—for Britain had excusable, though mistaken, inducements for seeking to perpetuate her transatlantic supremacy,—was not in the resistance of the Anglo-Americans, but in the coercive efforts of England to prolong her dominion beyond its natural term of duration. The error was a parental one; and, to return to the preceding illustration, is like that of parents who would keep their children in perpetual pupilage, inhibit them from freedom, separate location, and the setting up for themselves in the world.

The empire continues to reap the fruits of the colonial enterprise of our ancestors two centuries past. American independence has been no drawback on this country. The United States are still our best friends and customers, and more than any other still contribute to our manufacturing and commercial prosperity. Suppose America had never been colonised, and helped forward by British settlers; suppose the development of her natural resources had been left to the Red Indian — to merely her own aboriginal agency — what beneficial re-

lations is it likely would have now subsisted between her and England? Would a population have arisen to take annually from eight to ten millions in value of British produce and manufactures? Oh! no; she would in all likelihood have remained as destitute and as unprofitable a connexion as the Pampas or Patagonia now is. Suppose a less extreme case, that she had not been left in her infant efforts wholly unaided by European arts, capital, and civilisation, but that France or Holland had taken the start of England in her reclamation and settlement, we should, in this case, have suffered serious detriment. We should have lost all the advantages of first occupation and first impressions; of planting the English language, English habits, tastes, and wants, among a vast and unknown population, by which the dependence of the Western world has been far more beneficially, and, it is likely, more permanently, guaranteed, than it ever could have been by British tax-collectors or British grenadiers.

Besides establishing a present lien and future preference in the development of new countries, our first occupation of them conferred other national benefits. Our colonial policy may not have been the best; it may have partaken largely of the narrow spirit of the age; but it has always been more liberal than that of any other European state. At no period of history did we ever go openly to war against the natural fertility of the soil, to stint Europe in the supply of colonial products. But this was done by the Dutch, who actually rooted up the spice trees of the Philippine Islands, lest Europe should be too abundantly supplied, and at too cheap a rate, with mace, nutmegs, and cloves. The policy of Spain was still more execrable. South America, in her hands, was no better than a vast prison-house: it was hermetically sealed against all the rest of Europe; sealed, not only against

European commodities, but European ideas. Strangers were all but excluded, and it was with great mistrust and difficulty that travellers could obtain an insight into her code of prison discipline. Her tyranny was twofold ; extending over the minds of the people, as well as the natural capabilities of the country. The colonial policy of France hardly offers a brighter page. Indeed, France has only just begun to master the rudiments of commercial legislation, either in her domestic or external policy. But these have been the chief colonising states, next to ourselves. And what, it may be asked, would have been the probable consequences on the weal and progress of England, or even on the colonies themselves, had they been allowed to anticipate us in the possession of our colonial empire ? Had Jamaica and Barbadoes, Virginia and Massachusetts, been first theirs, instead of ours ? Had the spirit which revoked the edict of Nantes, and established the Inquisition, been allowed to extend its withering influence over their future destinies, in place of the spirit of Queen Elizabeth and Oliver Cromwell, would the colonies have been what they are, or would England have been what she is, — so rich and powerful, so supreme in commerce and industry ? Or, more important than these, would Britain have commanded, to the same extent, the means of national happiness ?

To these questions it is hardly likely there can be great discrepancies in the answers. But throwing aside their political bearings ; — abstaining from all dilation on the degree in which British Colonies have undoubtedly contributed to the commercial opulence, maritime strength, and greatness of the empire ; and on the obvious fact that a great empire, governed on moderate and enlightened principles, is, wherever its sway extends, a great blessing to the world ; — leaving these fertile themes to the elo-

quence of the historian, I shall only dwell on the plain, homely interrogation, Have not Colonies contributed immensely to the general advancement of the United Kingdom? Would its population have had the same command over the comforts and enjoyments of life without them? Would there have been the same appliances for wholesome, temperate, and luxurious existence, had the spice islands, and the coffee, sugar, rice, and cotton plantations been left to the foreigner? Would Dutch selfishness, Spanish bigotry, or French illiberality of the past, to the same extent have multiplied their products, and afforded the means, in the same profusion, for heightening the enjoyment of every meal, not at our own tables alone, but at the tables of every civilised community? What these states have done for themselves, as well as what they have done for the foreign possessions dependent upon them, in the way of colonial government, trade, and industry, appear to afford sufficient answers to these inquiries.

The question of our colonial policy has been adverted to from its relation to the subject of the present chapter, and also because a disposition is sometimes evinced to undervalue the importance of colonies, or adopt erroneous views respecting them. They are, in truth, an inseparable adjunct to every great state, but more especially to an insular empire like the British, whose energies are circumscribed within a limited territory. Every prosperous country has a tendency to become redundantly rich and redundantly peopled. For these exuberances new outlets must be found; new lands must be discovered or reclaimed, and the foundation laid of new communities. Colonisation, for these ends, offers the natural remedies for natural disorders; and the nation that applies them cannot thereby be either weakened or impoverished. The errors of England, when she erred, have not been in this direc-

tion, but in another, — in colonising, as Old Rome did, for plunder and dominion. But her colonial wars have not been so frequent as sometimes represented. They originated less in outlying causes, than in causes nearer home — in her own bosom — in the propensity to fight on slight occasions. The bellicose passion was there, and the means to indulge it, both pecuniary and physical, abundant ; and when this is the case, whether among nations or individuals, pretexts for quarrels, private or international, will never be wanting, — trifles will serve. If there be no German electorate or colonies to dispute about; no furs or cat-skins, Canadian boundary, Dutch barrier, Spanish succession, or Russian arrogance and aggression to embroil communities, there is always at hand the bustling vanity or restless ambition of a Cardinal Alberoni or Baron Goltz to disturb the world's sweet peace and development.

In her colonial system England has had other sins than war to answer for, but they are more venial. They have been an excess of parental fondness. She loved her offspring too well, nursed them too much, and clung to them too long. But her greatest failings appear to have been redeemed during late years by the gradual but comprehensive introduction of a more enlightened system of colonial rule and intercourse. Freedom, as may have been recognised in preceding pages, has been the chief pioneer of political and industrial advancement ; and the same genial principle which has proved beneficial to the mother-country is not likely to prove hurtful, or be long withheld, if desired, from her remaining dependent offspring. The last quarter of a century has been almost an uninterrupted series of concessions to Liberality, both at home and abroad ; in the former of local management in local affairs, and in the colonies of self-government. The abolition of

monopolies, of discriminative duties, and of the celebrated navigation and coasting-trade laws, have formed so many practical corollaries of Free Trade, which have been successively carried out as advancing public opinion and the adjustment of old interests afforded opportunity.

Mistaken impressions on the true interests of commerce were largely influential in determining a former generation in its pertinacious resistance to the independence of the American States. A gainful monopoly it was thought would be endangered by their political freedom. It proved an illusive apprehension ; no commercial or maritime interest suffered. The mercantile and industrial pursuits of both countries were sharpened and multiplied. The distractions of a distant and divided political administration were cut off, and the duties of the home government became more concentrated on domestic affairs. The transatlantic colonies had long been a source of expense and international involvement to the parent state. Two wars had been waged on their account, which cost upwards of 240 millions of money ; and the expense of their civil government from the accession of the Hanover family to 1788 has been estimated at forty millions more.* For all these pecuniary sacrifices, the chief return had been the imaginary profit of some miserable navigation and trading monopolies that impoverished both countries and cramped their energies.

As to the question of right, it pertained to both sides. It seemed reasonable, as the colonies enjoyed the protection of the mother-country, that they ought to bear a share of her public burdens. Although not represented in the British parliament, they could not on that account claim exemption from its fiscal jurisdiction, any more than un-

* Sir John Sinclair's History of the Revenue, part iii. p. 87.

represented Birmingham, Leeds, or Manchester. Upon this point scarcely a dissentient opinion existed in England, either among political parties, or in the community. The populace expressed no sympathy with the claim of the Bostonians to be exempt from taxation ; neither were there many addresses in their favour from the landed interest or the great commercial and municipal bodies of the kingdom. After the unexpected resistance of the colonies had rendered any effort to tax them hopeless, new ground was taken up, and it was sought to maintain the legislative apart from the fiscal jurisdiction of parliament. This was the favourite position of the Earl of Chatham ; but if not a metaphysical distinction, it was not a very valuable reservation, since the right to make laws, and not to impose taxes, could at best be only an incompatible if not profitless sovereignty. Political ascendancy, however, was tenaciously clung to, and it was only the declaration of independence, the disasters of the war, and the accession, first covertly, and then openly, of France, Spain, and Holland to the cause of the revolted provinces, that the Whig ministry, which replaced the ministry of Lord North, were induced to acquiesce in the withdrawal of all pretensions of sovereignty in the mother-country. So the great struggle ended, remarkable for its trivial beginning and momentous issues. It began with the trifling demand of only 35,000*l.* or 40,000*l.* in taxes, to make up the 1*s.* reduction in the land-tax*, and ended with laying the foundation of unknown prosperous communities.

As already observed, the States had a semblance of right on their side in resistance, as well as England in its endeavour to coerce them. But though an offshoot of Great Britain, it did not follow that they were always to

* Chancellor of the Exchequer's Speech, May 13. 1767.

continue in a state of minority and dependence. If they had the power and were competent to the task of self-government, they had an unquestionable right to its benefits and to make the experiment. The main points for the politic consideration of England, were not the perpetual allegiance of the colonies, which was a chimerical aspiration, but whether they were ripe for independence, whether a preponderance of colonial interests and numbers were in favour of severance ; and secondly, whether the colonies were both disposed and competent among nations to self-defence and national existence. The last was an important consideration with the parent state, whose interests might not be adverse to the independence of her colonies, but directly so to the transfer of their allegiance, or their falling under the dominion of a rival power, by which its strength and resources might be dangerously augmented, or the progress of the colonies themselves be obstructed. The evils appendant to this contingency have been already dwelt upon in relation to the colonial mismanagement of the continental transmarine possessions.

Experience has satisfactorily answered these uncertainties in respect of the American States. They cast their weight into the scale of no other nation ; they have shown themselves adequate both to self-government and self-defence ; and their sympathies and their interests have continued more closely knit with those of England than of any other country. That which is most to be regretted is our pertinacious effort at coercion ; but even this had its extenuations. It arose from the strong sense of right cherished by all parties, an apprehension of commercial detriment, and a horror of a breach in imperial unity by the dismemberment of the empire. George III. was the last person in his dominions, as he told the first

ambassador from the States, who acquiesced in their independence. The proud and obdurate monarch shrank from the idea of transmitting the "little kingdom" to his successor, which Dr. Franklin had predicted. Lord North yielded to the king's arbitrary will, and was guilty of the grave offence, in his responsible position, of sacrificing his public duty to the sovereign and the nation to private affections. For three years the minister appears to have been hopeless of a successful issue to the colonial struggle, was fully sensible of the inadequacy of his administration in the conflict, and communicated his sentiments in writing to the king ; yet, in blameable complacency to his unyielding master, continued to carry on the government.*

About this period a question of considerable influence

* In Lord Brougham's "Historical Sketches" is inserted the letter of Lord North to the king, to whom he makes the above disclosure of his sentiments and situation. It is subjoined : the date is uncertain, but supposed to be October 1779 or 1780:—"Lord Gower [President of the Council] came to Lord North to inform him that he had long felt the utmost uneasiness at the situation of his majesty's affairs ; that nothing can be so weak as the government ; that nothing is done ; that there was no discipline in the state, the army, or the navy, and that impending ruin must be the consequence of the present system of government ; that he thought himself obliged, as well in conscience as in wisdom, to desire an immediate dismissal from his employment ; that he had no connexion with any of the members of the opposition, which he thought as wicked as the administration is weak ; that nothing can afford the least hope but a coalition, and he is afraid even that remedy may be too late ; that he feels the greatest gratitude for the many marks of royal goodness which he has received, but that he does not think it the duty of a faithful servant to endeavour to preserve a system which must end in the ruin of his majesty and of the country. He is determined never again to take office, but to support government in his private capacity. Lord North thinks that Lord Gower's resignation at the present moment must be the ruin of the administration. In Lord

on national progress rose into consideration. For the first time since the era of the Commonwealth, the subject of Parliamentary Reform assumed in 1779 an imposing and tangible shape. Its origin and purpose may be briefly noticed. War with the colonies, like wars with most nations, began under the favouring auspices of the populace and landed interest. These, however, soon became dissatisfied with the privations and taxes hostilities entailed upon them. Trade decayed; the farmers were impoverished by low prices, rents fell, and all the productive classes of the community became dissatisfied with the government. But the war had made the minister all-powerful in parliament. A vast increase in the public expenditure, improvident loans, and lavish contracts had gathered round him such a host of placemen and expectants, that he could always command overwhelming majorities, and defy the representatives of the people. It was to disperse or at least circumscribe this phalanx of corruption, that a reform in the representation was projected: by shortening the duration of parliaments, and throwing into the Commons men who represented the interests of industry, the power of a reckless war faction it was thought might be counteracted.

For the promotion of these objects large public meetings were held in all the chief counties, cities, and towns of the kingdom. Reform associations were generally established, and petitions signed by persons of the first consequence, both clergy and laity, presented to parliament. Such was the effect of the excitement, that several popular measures were carried in defiance of the Treasury cohort;

North's arguments with Lord Gower, Lord North owns that he had certainly one disadvantage, which is, *that he holds in his heart, and has held for these three years, just the same opinion with Lord Gower.*"

among them, Mr. Burke's Bill of Civil List Reform, and the resolution of Mr. Dunning against the increased and increasing influence of the crown.

Eight weeks after this celebrated enunciation, the political horizon changed its aspect. It arose from the anti-Catholic riots of the Protestant Association, which brought London to the brink of destruction. A reaction instantly followed. People became alarmed at the evidence of ignorance and violence these dreadful disorders afforded. The executive rather than the democratical branches of the constitution appeared to require strengthening for the general security. Government gained immensely by the tumults; all public assemblies for political purposes were shunned and discountenanced; and ministers taking advantage of the panic to dissolve parliament, at the general election which ensued most of the members who had advocated parliamentary reform were thrown out.

A result more abiding than representative reform grew out of the pressure of the American war. "England's difficulties are" said to have been "Ireland's opportunity;" and such in this instance they proved from the valuable concessions she obtained. For a lengthened period she had suffered equally from religious and commercial disqualifications, and was held ministrant solely to the power and opulence of England. From equal rights in trade the Irish were rigorously interdicted; not being allowed to export their woollen cloths to any part of Europe, lest they should compete with the English manufacture abroad; no intercourse was permitted with the British colonies, except through an English port; nor were they permitted to export their linens, wool, beef, or live cattle to England, lest it should injure the landed interest by depressing the price of similar articles pro-

duced in this country. For relief from some of the more odious and oppressive of these mercantile interdictions England's embroilment with the colonies and the continental powers offered a tempting prospect. Consequently, in 1779, a loud cry was raised in Dublin and the chief cities for Free Trade ; and as this cry was heartily joined in by the armed associations of volunteers, suddenly organised under the pretext of defending the country against an invasion threatened by France, it could not be safely resisted. Accordingly, on the meeting of the Irish parliament in October of that year, an amendment to the address of the courtiers was adopted by a large majority, in these words :— “ We beg leave humbly to represent to your majesty, that it is not by temporary expedients, but by a FREE TRADE, that the nation is now to be saved from impending ruin.” The address was carried up to the castle under the escort of the Duke of Leinster, at the head of the Dublin volunteers, and amidst the acclamations of the people. The intimation it conveyed was promptly responded to by England in her then perilous condition ; and in December following, Lord North submitted to parliament his propositions for the relief of the trade of Ireland. They abolished the chief of the commercial restrictions mentioned ; allowing the Irish to export their woollens, and admitting them to a direct export and import trade with the British colonies. These relaxations, it is unpleasant to relate, were very displeasing to the English manufacturers. In the preceding year, when it had been proposed to admit the cotton-yarn manufactured in Ireland into this country, the commercial and manufacturing districts took the alarm ; petitions and instructions were forwarded from all the chief towns to their representatives in parliament ; counsel and evidence were heard at the bar : it was with the utmost

difficulty this trifling boon was obtained for an oppressed community. At a later period, in 1785, when the admission into England, duty free, of Irish linens was sought to be conceded, the measure was opposed by a petition from Manchester to the House of Lords, with 120,000 signatures. While Manchester, Bristol, and the other chief cities (London excepted) were stoutly opposed to the grant of commercial freedom to Ireland, they, acting on similar ungenerous motives, were not less resolute in their efforts to keep within the grasp of their monopoly the American colonies, and actually raised regiments, by voluntary subscriptions, for carrying on the war, and reducing them to submission. All this, it is superfluous to add, has been changed, and the great provincial marts wholly divested of the selfish prepossessions by which the general unity and prosperity of the empire would have been retarded.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GEORGE III.—RISE AND PROGRESS OF ENGLAND'S
CONTINENTAL ALLIANCES.

Commencement of Mr. Pitt's Ministry.—His Regency Bill and Fiscal Reforms.—Foreign Policy of the Minister.—Progress of our Continental Connections.—Principles of Foreign Intervention.—M. Heeren's Treatise.—Bonaparte's Continental Domination.—The Balance of Power.—England's Interests identified with the Nationality and Prosperity of States.—Dismemberment of Poland.—Inconsistency of Mr. Pitt, and his evasive Defence of Neutrality on the Aggression of the Allied Despots.—The permanent Equilibrium of Power in States incompatible with their Internal Progress.—Perversion of the Balance of Power to the Purposes of Party, unnecessary Wars, and a mischievous Diplomacy.—The Chevalier D'Eon as auxiliary to Diplomacy.

FROM the conclusion of peace with the Americans and their continental abettors, no external cause intervened materially to obstruct the prosperous career of the country until the breaking out of the great war of 1793. After the resignation of Lord North, in 1782, party evolutions became the engrossing public topic. On the termination of the brief premiership of the Marquis of Rockingham, the king had immediately appointed the Earl of Shelburne his successor, who at once accepted the office without consulting the rest of the cabinet. Upon this the Rockingham Whigs resigned their places, either from its being a violation of party etiquette on such occasions by the new minister, or from its having thwarted the aspirations of Mr. Fox (ostensibly Lord Portland) to the premiership. Mr. Nicholls, a M. P. of the period, says the “Whigs had ceased to be a party and had become a

faction;* their efforts being directed to the attainment of no great public object, save the possession of power. The terms of the peace were the alleged reason of their hostility to the Shelburne ministry; but the substitution of themselves, combined with personal dislike of that nobleman, seem to have been the real ones. They enjoyed only for a short term the fruits of their unpopular coalition with Lord North; it proved quite as unprofitable as unprincipled. From the moment this confederacy was formed, a contemporary says, "I lost all confidence in public men. I clearly saw that they sacrificed their public principles to private pique, and their honour to their ambition."† Mr. Fox's India Bill, however, was the rock on which the coalition proximately foundered. This measure was so unhappily framed that it alarmed the king for his prerogatives and municipal corporations for their chartered rights. By the coalition, and the new project of Indian government, the Whig party were divided and ruined, and their Tory colleagues wholly discredited. Dexterously availing himself of their errors, Mr. Pitt was enabled to reach the helm of power, seconded both by the court and the nation; and which he continued to hold during a memorable term of European history, with the short intermission of the peace of Amiens, till his death in 1806.

The new minister was the second son of the late Earl of Chatham, and in the twenty-fourth year of his age. He had been sedulously trained in statesmanship, was master of all its arts, and aided by great natural and acquired gifts. He had the prudence of age and the knowledge of experience; was eloquent in debate, and

* Recollections of the Reign of George III., p. 172.

† Life of Bishop Watson, by his Son, p. 105.

though himself independent of party ties, was thoroughly conversant with their tactics and those of parliament. Power was the ruling passion of his life, and, by adroitly watching opportunities, he speedily reached the summit, and may, both from public qualities and private worth, have been the fittest man to govern the realm. His elevation, like that of Lord North fourteen years previously, settled the executive of the kingdom ; and supported, after his appeal to a general election, by a large parliamentary majority, left little hope to parties of undermining its stability.

The domestic policy of Mr. Pitt was well calculated to assist the country in recovering from the disasters of colonial hostilities. The finances were sought to be improved by a better management of the crown lands, by the suppression of smuggling, the consolidation of taxes, and the reduction of the public debt. In dealing with the last, he shared the prevalent delusion of a faith in the miraculous liquidating powers of the compound interest accruing from a borrowed capital. In economical wisdom, however, he went beyond his contemporaries in his commercial treaty with France in 1787 : it was based on those principles of a mutual interchange of benefits, which were then only beginning to be appreciated by statesmen ; and the merit of the young minister was enhanced by contrast with his elders of the Opposition, who contended for the existence of a national and hereditary antagonism between France and England in place of reciprocity of interests.* Upon the question of the Regency in 1788 he took the constitutional side, in accordance with the settlement of the Revolution ; maintaining that the right of supplying a suspension in the royal authority devolved

* Mr. Fox and Mr. Francis. Annual Register, vol. xxix, p. 67.

on the two remaining branches of the legislature, and not, of constitutional right, on the heir apparent, though the Prince of Wales might have a prior claim.

The Foreign Policy of the minister appeared most open to animadversion. It was meddling and officious; the old error of too ready interference in the quarrels of neighbouring states, and volunteering the arbitrament of their differences, which had entailed on the community such irredeemable incumbrances, was obtrusively persisted in. Intoxicated by his success, in concert with Prussia, in imposing on Holland an obnoxious stadtholder, Mr. Pitt seemed constantly on the watch for objects of foreign intervention. Proud of the vast resources he wielded, and which were in course of rapid increase by the peace, he was not only ready but impatient for combat. The affair with Spain relative to the fur-settlement at Nootka Sound, and her absurd pretensions to the proprietorship of the entire west coast of America, from Cape Horn to the sixtieth degree of north latitude, might have been arranged without the parade of a costly armament. Jealousy of Russian aggrandisement formed the next pretext for vast warlike preparations, and, in grandiloquent phrases, the insignificant town of Otzakoff was magnified into the "key of Constantinople," the pivot on which turned the exact poise of the European balance of power. Fortunately, on this occasion there was no disposition in the people for hostilities, and the bellicose aspirations of the premier ended without interrupting the progress of the nation in peaceful arts.

As these external aberrations of Mr. Pitt formed the most questionable parts of his early administration, it may not be an unsuitable place to advert to the leading principles upon which, from a distant period, England has ostensibly professed to govern her connections with

the continent. It is an old affinity of the country; in theory it is an abstraction derived from the colonial system, but differing in this, that colonies are a reality, the other only, according to its later versions, a prestige, or influence exercised over continental affairs. It was a substantive relation during the Norman period, and under the Plantagenets ripened into a pertinacious claim to the entire realm of France in virtue of the maternal descent of Edward III. But the injurious results from the ambitious wars for the French crown, and the distractions from the twofold possessions of the barons in England and Normandy, have been previously dwelt upon. Relieved from these entanglements, English policy, during the prosperous era of the Tudors, became almost exclusively concentrated on English interests. The advent of the Reformation completed our severance, by the renunciation of all spiritual or secular allegiance to the see of Rome.

From the Reformation to the Revolution the religious interest became the predominant interest of the kingdom. The throne of Queen Elizabeth was based on the Protestant faith, and she watchfully sought to strengthen her security by its maintenance both at home and abroad. It was with this aim she formed her connections on the continent; assisting the Huguenots in France, and the Netherlanders in their resistance to the bigoted yoke of Spain, by subsidies, volunteers, and every other mode short of open war. English interests were unquestionably identified with this wise policy, because they were identified with the promulgation of the Protestantism England had espoused, and which was doubtless more favourable than the adverse Roman worship to general freedom and progress. The successor of this great princess failed to tread in her steps. From the effeminacy of his character, his love of personal indulgence, or engrossment in pole-

mical disputes, King James took little heed of continental affairs. Indeed this prince was no statesman at all, but more apt for a college professor, who delights in jokes, a well-spread table, and the pedantries of learning and theology. From the first to the last of the Stuarts, their course may be said to have been anti-national, and influenced by no general or patriotic principle tending to the elevation of the kingdom. They were less English than French in their preferences ; and their sympathies were not with the Protestantism or the liberties of England, but with the popery and despotism of the court of Versailles. The short interregnum of the Protectorate offered an interruption to their impolitic career ; but though the foreign policy of Oliver Cromwell was thoroughly British, it was, like his domestic rule, greatly determined by the precarious tenure of his power, and it may be passed over to the Revolution, which formed an epoch in our continental alliances.

By the Settlement of 1688 the religious interest, from the security Protestantism had consummated, may be said to have lost its primary ascendancy, and become subordinate to that of the preservation of our political influence abroad and constitution at home. In our transmarine relations a new principle intervened ; and the defence of the national faith became secondary to the resistance of the territorial aggrandisement of an ambitious sovereign. With this end the great wars of King William and Queen Anne were waged ; they were all directed against Louis XIV., first, to defeat his aggressive designs on the Low Countries, and, next, to avert the junction of France and Spain under one crowned head.* The same political prin-

* The wars of King William and Queen Anne met the hearty approval of George III. He said that he "was an old Whig, and considered those statesmen who made barrier treaties, and conducted

ciple, of guarding against the autocracy of any single power, ostensibly influenced British councils after the accession of the Hanover family ; but its action was diversified by the interests of political parties, the electorate, colonial interests, and sometimes by the interests of rival potentates, as under George II., when England alternately championed, first Austria, and next Prussia her opponent.

These brief advertences to the past bring us to the period of Mr. Pitt's administration,—the policy of which, it has been seen, was not one of abstinence from continental connections, like that of Sir Robert Walpole, but one of eager intervention in accordance with the example and training to public life he had received from the Earl of Chatham. From this course of foreign policy it can hardly be said there has been any deviation up to the present time. During the last seventy years England has taken a leading part in continental vicissitudes, only varying her grounds of intervention with the changing phases of the times — with the discouraging aspects of the French revolution, the insatiable ambition of the first Napoleon, and the rapid extension of the powerful empire of Russia.

A German writer of no mean authority, and strenuous admirer of the wisdom of Mr. Pitt's continental system, has attempted to define those interests by which an insular state, though geographically separated from the continent, may become identified with it in its political movements.* These are, the interest of independence and security ; the interest of trade and commerce ; the interest of territorial acquisitions ; and, finally, the personal and family

the last ten years of the Succession War, the ablest in Europe."—*Lord Malmesbury's Diary*, vol. iv. p. 44.

* Historical Treatises, by A. H. L. Heeren, p. 204. Talboys, Oxon.

interests of the rulers. But paramount as all these interests may have been in governing the policy of the past, it is doubtful whether any of them retain any considerable validity at present, either from the altered relations of England abroad, or the altered views of her leading statesmen. Take, for example, the external interests of commerce; for these, it is an admitted truism of economical science that the best guarantee is the mutual interests of buyers and sellers, without the intervention of commercial treaties or political alliances of any kind, further than for a safe and free interchange of commodities. The "personal and family interests" of our rulers abroad have been doubly extinguished, first by the expiration of any rival dynastic claims; and next, by the accession of Queen Victoria, they have been suspended, if not terminated, under the operation of the Salic law of Hanover, which disqualifies a female sovereign for succession to the throne of that kingdom. Any probable interest from territorial possessions on the continent, experience has satisfactorily negatived. Dunkirk was once ours, but was sold to France by Charles II., and the proceeds dissipated in court licentiousness, parliamentary corruption, or the reward of a servile minister. Of Calais we long retained possession; it was the last remains of the Plantagenet conquests in France, and its loss in 1558 was much regretted by the nation; but in reality its surrender was a gain, by dispelling the visionary delusion, so costly to England, of French dominion. Heeren's first-mentioned interest, namely, that of "independence and security," remains the most weighty; in this direction continental alliances may be desirable, but scarcely appear, from past trials, to be indispensable. In the height of his power Bonaparte menaced England with an invasion; assembled vast armaments ostensibly

for the purpose, but shrunk from the perilous experiment, and turned upon Austria, or the weak and distracted Spain, as easier prey. Having passed scathless this menacing ordeal, when almost the entire continent was at the despotic will of a successful soldier of unsurpassed abilities, actuated, too, by the strongest motives to master the only powerful and most unrelenting of his adversaries, it would be the veriest hypochondria to live under the apprehension of any less future danger. The insular position of England, its maritime ascendancy, the unity and density of its population, and its vast and ready command of resources, seem to place our independence beyond all peril: still less do we appear exposed to the minor calamity of a revival of the buccaneer practices of a barbarous age, of the Danish rovers, who made predatory descents on our shores for tribute and spoliation. Against any desultory attack of this kind the British island seems guaranteed by her naval superiority. It is hardly a national boast to say, that the "trident of Neptune is the sceptre of the world," and enables the power that wields it not only to maintain a circumambient coast-guard, but to emulate the flight of the falcon; and hover over, or, if need be, retaliate at any point on any nation that may have provoked its vengeance.

Conceding, however, all these appliances, both defensive and retaliatory, in our favour, it would be pushing the nonintervention principle to a hurtful extreme to conclude that the invariable policy of England consists in entire isolation. The dominant ascendancy, just adverted to, of Napoleon, is an example to the contrary. By his Berlin and Milan decrees he sought entirely to interdict British trade on the continent; our actual blockade of his ports he sought to counteract by issuing

paper blockades, barring, under the penalty of confiscation, the entrance of British merchandise into any country of the continent. By this war of retaliation every state in Europe suffered immensely; and it is unquestionably the interest of England, in concert with other powers, to avert by treaty, coalition, or war, the tendency of any nation, German, French, or Russian, from attaining a corresponding tyrannical domination.

Both political and commercial reasons concur in the policy of a timely resistance to the establishment of a pervading, or, as it was wont to be termed, a universal monarchy in Europe. Most European states have been formed on the basis of a separate nationality, which it is their interest to maintain inviolate. It has generally arisen from diversity of race, language, climate, natural products, religion, manners, or usages. Under the free action of these characteristic elements, it is probable their internal prosperity may be more fully developed than by compulsory incorporation with any neighbouring community, especially if that community stands at a lower level of civilisation, and is only superior in the physical resources of population or territorial area. The common interests of nations, as science now interprets them, are reciprocal, not adverse; consist in mutual progress, not decline; in mutual affluence, not impoverishment. Such community of welfare being admitted, and the prosperity of England being founded on commerce, it is manifest that any changes on the continent tending to lessen her trade there by the subversion of the independence or the free action and development of its people and their resources, she may, consistently with sound policy, resist.

Upon the same principle that the interests of England are more identified with the prosperity of neighbouring

states than their extinction or decline, may be commended the services she has rendered by interfering for the settlement of their differences, and the maintenance among them of the general peace. For a tribunal of international appeal she is peculiarly fit from insular position, and the absence of any continental possession likely to bias her decisions. It is an office she has often discharged, singly or in concert with other powers, for the common benefit of Europe, since the Peace of 1815. One of the earliest examples of arbitration since that epoch, is the part she took, in concert with France and Russia in 1829, in the severance of Greece from the Ottoman dominion, and its erection into an independent kingdom. This settlement closed a protracted and desolating war between Greece and her Turkish oppressor, created a new free state in Europe, and afforded opportunity, if such were her mission or capabilities, of recovering something of ancient renown.

About the same period the Porte itself was saved by the intervention of England from subjugation by its rebel vassal, the viceroy of Egypt. The armies of Mehemet Ali had conquered the whole of Syria, and, after traversing Asia Minor and defeating the Turkish forces in the great battle of Koniah (Dec. 21. 1832), had nearly reached Constantinople. In his extremity, the Sultan Mahmoud sought the perilous aid of Russia, the oldest and most dangerous enemy of his empire. From this alternative, and the further advance of his Egyptian invaders, the Porte was saved by the intervention of France and England. The same powers successfully interfered to settle amicably the fratricidal dispute which had arisen in the royal families of Spain and Portugal. But their most arduous task was the arrangement of the bitter quarrel between Holland and Belgium in 1832.

These states had been compressed into one kingdom by the fiat of the Vienna congress of 1815. But insuperable obstacles existed to their peaceful consolidation. Differences in language, in religion, and in educational institutes, kept up jealousies and aversions, and prevented cordial unity. At first England, France, and Russia jointly interposed their good offices; but Holland, which was averse to separation, refused concurrence in the terms of severance they prescribed; and Russia declining to act coercively*, the executive part of enforcing submission to their award devolved on France and England. This was vigorously done, and the French, after a spirited siege, met by a not less spirited resistance on the side of the Dutch, put Antwerp into the possession of the Belgians, and then quietly withdrew into their own territory. These form examples of disinterested mediation, of which there are few instances in the antecedent history of European diplomacy. Austria and Prussia beheld the intervention of France and England in the Low Countries with some mistrust, and the latter kingdom assembled a large army on the frontier; but neither of the arbitrating powers being actuated by ambitious impulses, the great object of intervention — the maintenance of the peace of Europe — was secured.

Interventions of this specific character do not appear open to serious objection. They are the exercise of an international police, for the maintenance of the general

* Russia has mostly abstained from active interventions in the affairs of the western nations. Catherine II. made an early declaration against the French revolution, but gave no assistance, in forces or subsidies, to the coalesced powers to prevent the spread of the republican frenzy. Her eccentric successor, Paul, was the first of her sovereigns to deviate from this cautious policy, and sent a large army under Suvaroff into Italy.

peace, order, and security of Europe. But the interferences of England in continental affairs have not always been so defensible. The positive evils of war have been incurred to avert contingent, petty, or imaginary dangers. A neighbouring power was alleged to be aggressive; a particular line of succession to a vacant throne was represented to be fraught with danger, or the balance of power was in jeopardy. The last was a favourite diplomatic conceit during the last century, especially while English interests were complicated with those of the Dutch provinces of William III., or the electorate of Hanover. In the absence of more cogent reasons, it still continues to be urged as a pretext for foreign interventions, armaments, or alliances. No doubt there is a certain equilibrium of power among the continental states, which it is desirable England should maintain: this has been conceded in the example given of the hurtful result from the Napoleon domination; but the great conveniency of the "balance" to a restless minister is, that it is wholly undefined. That it does not consist in any precise demarcation of territory or population, experience attests. Europe has undergone every possible mutation; kingdoms have risen and disappeared, as Prussia and Poland; even empires have declined and risen into pre-ponderance, as Turkey and Russia; yet the balance of power, as if no such derangement had intervened, continued to be appealed to as the polar star of public policy and the only guarantee of European security.

Mr. Pitt's conduct affords an instance of the evasive or chameleon character of the balance of states. In 1795 this minister concluded a treaty of mutual guarantee of possessions with Catherine of Russia, just when the empress was on the eve of consummating the third and final partition of Poland. At this time Mr. Pitt was

more intent on checking the growth of republican France than despotic Russia; consequently, in his negotiation with the empress, ignored Poland; and, when reminded of the omission by Mr. Fox, he made this reply: "In general policy, I am ready to confess that this partition is unjust; but it does not go, as is said, to overturn the balance of power in Europe, for which the right honourable gentleman, as it suits his argument, expresses his solicitude; for that country [Poland] being nearly *equally divided* between the three great powers, it can little contribute to the undue aggrandisement of either."* So the equality of the division of the spoil was pleaded in extenuation of its turpitude. If equals be added to equals the remains are equal. Upon this mathematical truism Mr. Pitt adroitly evaded the main and only issue, if there be any verity in the balance principle; namely, the disturbance given to the pre-existing arrangements of Europe by the augmented power of the three partitioning states, excluding France, Spain, England, and other western nations.

Upon more general considerations than I have adverted to, the balance of states appears a chimerical aspiration. There is a constant tendency among nations, as individuals, to inequality; and interference with the social tendencies of one, or the political tendencies of the other, seems alike indefensible. Old states, made effeminate by affluence, will naturally become stationary, or decline; while younger states, prompted by their greater resources, wants, or energies, may rise to an equality with, or exceed them. Russia is the youngest of the great European communities, but, with her increasing population and limitless territory, is likely to outstrip the oldest of them. The United States of America, from

* Speech, May 10. 1796.

similar or still greater advantages, it is not improbable may outrun the mightiest nations of the old world. For France or England to interfere to prevent such developments of power, would be quite as futile and inequitable as to pass a law that no man should be richer or more influential than another, however superior in natural or acquired capabilities. Even Grotius dissents from this aggressive absurdity. "The opinion," says he, "is not to be tolerated, that the law of nations permits war for the purpose of preventing one nation from acquiring a dangerous preponderance of power over another. When war, indeed, is just on other grounds, such a motive may decide on its prudence; but that a fear of suffering injury should give a right to inflict it, is against all rules of equity."

The balance principle has only been one of many pretexts for foreign interventions. Our continental wars have been much governed by the struggles of political parties for ascendancy. Whoever were in power, whatever was the policy pursued, whether pacific or belligerent, it was mostly denounced by the opposition. If the course of public administration was peaceable, it was held forth as weak, pusillanimous, or perhaps as compromising the national honour or dignity; if it was warlike, then it was held up as intermeddling, ruinous to commerce, and, by the increase of taxes, impoverishing to the people. A change of ministers was urged as an indispensable preliminary to a change of measures, though the new placemen mostly deviated into the track of their predecessors, after securing the helm of power by a first sacrifice to the popular outcry, whether *that* was for peace—often hastily, perhaps ingloriously, concluded—or for war, often rashly, and without adequate preparation, entered upon.

A third and last reason that tended to cherish continental connections, was the perverted diplomacy of the period. Ambassadors are considered the representatives of their sovereigns; they are, in fact, their political attorneys, who manage their business, and that of their subjects, at foreign courts; a useful and perhaps necessary agency; but in their zeal to carry out the ambitious policy of a past age, they often became, like attorneys of lower degree, auxiliary to the fomenting, in lieu of preventing, national quarrels: like meddling gossips or mercenary pamphleteers, who, by scandal or *mensonge*, create and keep up suspicion and dislike, where otherwise none would exist. Ostensibly, the chief purpose of foreign missions was to maintain our influence, and keep down that of rival powers. For this end parties were kept up abroad, as they were for ministerial support at home. At St. Petersburg we had a party, and Prussia had a party; Potemkin, the favourite of the Czarina, was in our pay, to advocate our cause with his mistress; and the Count Panim in that of Prussia for a like purpose. At the Hague the position of the players was reversed. There we had Prussia with us and France against us, whom we tried to overreach by intrigue and corruption.*

Observers might be surprised that the shrewd mind of Mr. Pitt did not rise above this idle and profligate game, if they did not reflect that his superior education had been agreeable to routine. Occupied as ambassadors often were, they were no better than mischief-makers or international disturbers. Our meddling with the internal disputes of the Dutch in 1787 has been adverted to as a

* Diary and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury, edited by his Grandson.

signal example of officiousness. Neither the obligation of treaty nor the interest of the nation called for our interference. At first Mr. Pitt himself thought it was no business of ours, but considered it a favourable juncture for establishing a “British party” at the Hague for future emergencies, and gave instructions accordingly to our minister.*

One of the great notorieties of the present reign was a member of the diplomatic body, the Chevalier D'Eon. His equivocal demonstrations were a source of no little strife and perplexity in his time; and though a strong, form not an inapt exemplification of the mystifications of his order. The Chevalier was a spy of Louis XV., and continued to be pensioned by the French court until the Revolution; and doubtless his adroitness in assuming the costume of either gender vastly facilitated his discoveries in London, and enabled him to fill with choice scandal the ambassadorial bag transmitted to Versailles. D'Eon had abilities; was an expert fencer, as well as great gambler and impostor, and, of course, profited largely by the heavy wagers to which his metamorphoses gave rise. But had Lord Mansfield and his brother sages, on the trial of these bets (July 1. 1788), been guided by Jeremy Bentham's judicial maxim of taking the best evidence, they would have avoided the ridiculous mistake of ruling this adventurer to be a *female*. Upon the Chevalier's death in 1810, he was found unmistakeably a perfect man; and that the foreign witnesses on the trial, one of them a surgeon, had perjured themselves. He died in deep poverty and isolation, the not unnatural issues of his Protean career.

* Diary and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury, edited by his Grandson, vol. ii. p. 254.

CHAPTER XXV.

GEORGE III.—COURT OF GEORGE III., MANNERS, AND
SOCIAL LIFE.

Sources of Diversity in Manners.—Example of the Court of St. James's.—Etiquette; Madame D'Arblay's Experience.—Dissipation of High Life; George Selwyn and his Contemporaries.—Intercourse with the Parisian Coterie of Wits and Savans; Madame Deffand and Baron d'Holbach.—Incidents of Free Living.—Changes at Court on the Coming-out of the Princes.—Almacks', and Discrimination of Caste.—The Opera and its Performers.—Prestige of the Nobility declines.—Sumpituousness of the Great, and general Spread of the Luxurious Arts.—Changes of Costume; Dress one of the Fine Arts.—Caricatures, Songs, and Satires.—Decline of Tavern Duels.—Religious Characteristics of the Time.

ALTHOUGH the manners and domestic customs of a people have no higher sanction than common use and courtesy, they mostly comprise the chief life and substance of a community. Politics, laws, and judicial administration may be of more sounding import, but often pertain only to fractional interests, or are of less frequent and universal concern. Therefore, in tracing the progress of a nation, changes in manners, and their description at any specific time, form neither trivial nor irrelevant topics.

It is a distinction of the human species to possess Manners; the lower animals have none, they have only appetites; and if any one is without manners—that is, without sympathy or deference in respect of others—he is not inaptly said to be a “brute,” and on a level with the lower orders of creation. Mankind, however, have not only manners, but they are nicely subdivided into classes,

from diversities in them ; and this forms a second superiority above the inferior denominations, the different species of which have no class distinctions, all being equal, and each, according to its powers, following exclusively the bent of its inclinations.

The sources of diversity of manners in society are too numerous to specify. Climate, religion, government, and pervading occupation form broad lines of demarcation between nations ; and one or more of these discrepancies long kept distinctly separate the three divisions of the United Kingdom, while their union under one imperial sovereignty, aided by more ready and frequent intercourse, has rapidly tended to fuse them into one homogeneous community. Among individuals, the chief causes of variety are differences of rank, fortune, pursuit, education, morals, or religion. But though these tend to divide men into classes, they do not in England, like the institution of castes in the East, produce an entire severance between them. They touch and commingle by various ramifications ; those of like income, worship, or politics, though they may for special conveniences form separate nuclei or coteries, are not wholly isolated, but, by a reciprocal interchange of benefits, identified with the general society.

The history of England is an instructive and varied theme ; and in changes of manners, as in forms of government and vicissitudes of religion, has practically exemplified almost every variety. At the most marked transitions in social progress a passing glance has been given, from the romance of Chivalry to the austerities of Puritanism, in which men seemed to be held less meant for happiness than mortification, and doomed to the miserable cave where

“ Honoriūs long did dwell ;
And hoped to merit heaven by making earth a hell !”

From this sad illusion issued the opposite extreme of error in the wild debauch of the Restoration. Save the introduction of delft-ware and Flemish paintings, the Dutch infusion was too slight and fleeting to work any change in the routine of daily life, the Revolution being a great constitutional epoch which addressed itself less to the manners than the reason of the community. The wars of King William and Queen Anne formed the leading national engrossment till the accession of the Hanover family; and the first two princes of this house, having been familiarised to the license of camps or the petty courts of Germany, fell rather below the standard to which their British lieges had attained.

George III., on his accession, was only in the twenty-third year of his age, and was doubtless an improvement on the model of his immediate predecessors. He was not remarkable for the graces or vivacity of adolescence; but he was free from the vices common with personages of his age and position. Little indeed was known of his personal character, for he had shunned all intimacies except that of Lord Bute, the confidential adviser of his widowed parent; but his manners were decorous, his attention to religion exemplary, and he was laudably tenacious of his promises, if too much so of his opinions. His worst failing was covetousness, a vice he had evinced from childhood, and unbecoming his exalted station; and it may further be added to his disadvantage, that he cherished a lasting dislike of any one who had offended him. In one point, however, he was in advance of his age, and certainly of any prince of his family. Both the antecedent Georges, though old men, lived in concubinage, openly kept one or more mistresses; but their successor, though young and robust, shunned the evil example. But he was not insensible to the tender passion. The lovely Lady Sarah Lennox made

an indelible impression, and, had he consulted his own wishes, he would have made her his partner on the throne; but the Privy Council held it inexpedient for the king to form a legitimate union with a subject*, and, deferring to their wisdom, he in a few months after his accession married a discreet princess, whose character gradually assimilated itself to that of his own, both in its better qualities and less attractive ones. From this period the Court of St. James's, which had been partly modelled on that of Versailles, without its polish, underwent an essential change, and the gross indecorum of the monarch selecting the wives of courtiers for mistresses, and pensioning off the husbands, ceased to be the established routine. The young king not only became a Benedict, but one of the first of his class, his fidelity to his consort being quite as remarkable as his previous continence.

A starched etiquette was a natural sequel under the new reign. The arbitrary policy of Bute may have entered into this formalism, his aim being not only to humble the grandes of the Revolution, but, by keeping them at a greater distance from the throne, to preserve undivided his sway. An anecdote related by the Countess of Craven will illustrate the discipline he sought to initiate. "Her majesty had expressed a desire to see a certain painting done by Lady Bolingbroke. As a peeress her ladyship thought it proper to attend herself with the picture; and though a lady of the bedchamber, but not in waiting, she sent a page to say she was solicitous to present the picture in person. Lord Bute, who was present with their majesties at the time, came out, and said, in a peremptory manner, that Lady Bolingbroke must deliver

* George Selwyn and his Contemporaries, vol. ii. p. 171.

it to the lady in waiting."* So that it was thought derogatory to the dignity of the queen to receive anything from the hands of a lady, even a peeress, unless officially in attendance.

Miss Burney—or, by marriage with a French emigrant, Madame D'Arblay—complains bitterly in her "Diary" of the hardships she underwent while a court lady. Her employment was personal attendance on Queen Charlotte, to assist in robing and keeping well replenished her majesty's snuff-box. Among the court observances she mentions, the following may be collected: that it was contrary to etiquette to sit or eat in the royal presence; you must not pass the royals on the road, nor any room in which they are if the door be open; if met you must stand still; in retiring from their presence it must be backwards; if they enter you must immediately rise, fall back to the wall, leaving the centre of the room for their exclusive use; you must not speak to them unless first spoken to †; if a royal personage con-

* Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach, vol. i. p. 38.

† Something parallel to this may be found in a lower swell than beneath the proud keep of Windsor, when, in the middle of the last century, the merchants of Glasgow were flushed with success in the tobacco-trade. Large fortunes were made, and a class of millionaires sprung up who deemed themselves immeasurably superior to all around them. "For one of the *shopocracy* or *corkocracy*," says Dr. Strang (*Glasgow and its Clubs*), "to speak to a tobacco aristocrat in the street, without some sign of recognition from the great man, would have been regarded as an insult. They were princes on the *Plainstanes*, and strutted about there every day as the rulers of the destinies of Glasgow. Like the princely merchants, too, who formerly paced the Piazetta in Venice, or occupied the gorgeous palaces in the Strada Balbi of Genoa, the tobacco lords distinguished themselves by a particular garb; being attired, like their Venetian and Genoese predecessors, in scarlet cloaks, curled wigs,

descends to visit a subject, he brings with him what guests he pleases, and has entire control, during his stay, of the mansion.

As princes are of ancient institution, these rules have doubtless a sage and politic meaning. They are chiefly intended to maintain the personal dignity of the sovereign, to prevent him being indecorously exhibited, or taken unawares, so as to betray weakness or the appearance of restraint on his will and pleasure. No hired sempstress appears to have suffered more than Fanny Burney did in her court life, sometimes ready to drop from hunger and long standing. Yet she says it was not cruelty or hardness of heart in the queen, who was kind and considerate, that inflicted this torture, but want of thought and experience of her situation. The same may be remarked of nine-tenths of the misery in life, — want of reciprocal knowledge and feeling between superiors and those dependent upon them.

For a long time after his marriage the court of George III. continued very dull, decorous, and parsimonious. The royal family rarely appeared in public, and the retirement in which they lived became a subject of complaint. Devoted to the nurture of a numerous family in the seclusion of Windsor or Kew, these were probably the king's happiest days, and his domestic joys only interrupted by the intrigues of rival politicians, an envenomed shaft from Junius, or a thundering "North Briton" from demagogue Wilkes. A good example of domesticity was not uncalled for. Outside the court,

cocked hats, and bearing gold-headed canes." But, oh, what a falling off was there ! The tobacco trade fell, and the grandees of shag and twist left off their scarlet cloaks ; and, in 1780, appeared in dark blue coats, buttons on one side only, plain corduroys buckled at the knee, and pointed shoes with bright brass buckles.

society in its higher circles was dissolute and shameless beyond anything of which the present day affords an example. Virtue has at least achieved this tribute,—an outward respect is paid to her ordinances. Bad men cannot now scale the highest places, or if, by a surprise they do reach them, they are promptly dislodged by the battery of public opinion. It has been remarked by a contemporary, that it would not now be tolerated that a prime minister should escort a woman of the town through the cloak-room of the Opera ; nor a first lord of the admiralty permit his mistress to do the honours of his house ; nor a lord of the bedchamber start with a *danseuse* in his carriage, and her whole family in his train. Yet such indecencies were perpetrated by the first men of the realm ; they were vain of their vices, and without mulct or blush paraded them before the public eye. Although the infamous Mendenham club and its libertine orgies were well known, it proved no bar to the reception of the members in society, or their advancement in the state. Sir Francis Dashwood, the founder, who officiated as high priest of its Circean rites, became Chancellor of the Exchequer ; the Earl of Sandwich, first lord of the Admiralty ; the Duke of Grafton, head of the Treasury ; and their worthy confrère, Jack Wilkes, was everything that the sober citizen could make of him. Gambling was a raging vice among the fashionables of both sexes. Charles James Fox led the way, and was a notable example of the fascination of deep play. Pitt and Wilberforce, at a later period, just tasted the intoxication, but escaped the delirious vortex in other engagements.*

* There must have been something of the vanity alluded to—affected *roueism* and contempt of prudish opinion—as well as strong passion in Fox's love of gambling ; he so recklessly pro-

Something may be learnt of the wits and fine gentlemen of the day from the "Selwyn Correspondence." Gallantry and the elegances of the table were of course, as they always must be, the chief ingredients in the pursuits of a man of pleasure. The toilet and boudoir were the fashionable shrines of worship by both sexes. What is now the court dress was then the general costume of all

voked his ruin by play, and blended with it fine scholarship and politics. Gibbon writes to Lord Sheffield:—"By the by, Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy work [relief of the clergy from subscription to the Articles] by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard. His devotion cost him only 500*l.* an hour, — in all 11,000*l.*" On another occasion, having lost a sum of almost ruinous amount, his friend Topham Beauclerk called on him the next morning, expecting to find the impoverished gamester in desponding mood. On the contrary, he found him quietly perusing Herodotus in the original Greek. "What would you have me do," said Fox, "when I have lost my last shilling?" He was at the head of all the wild riot of his time; a maccaroni of the first class: in lavish expenditure, in the pursuit of women, in excesses over the bottle, he outstripped the most notorious libertines of White's and Brookes's, near which club-houses he lodged with his friend Fitzpatrick at Mackie's the oilman. Some one mentioning this domicile, and remarking that "two such inmates would be the ruin of Mackie the oilman," "No," said George Selwyn; "so far from ruining him, they will make poor Mackie's fortune; for he will have the credit of having the finest pickles in his house of any man in London." The ruling passion of Mr. Fox no doubt was partly owing to the lax training of his father, who, by his lavish allowances, fostered his propensity for play. According to Chesterfield, the first Lord Holland had no fixed principles in religion or morality, and he censures him to his son for being "too unwary in ridiculing and exposing them." He gave full swing to Charles in his youth, supplying him freely with guineas for the gaming table. "Let nothing be done," said his lordship, "to break his spirit; the world will do that for him."—(*Selwyn Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 220.) At his death, in 1774, he left him 150,000*l.* to pay his debts; it was all bespoke, and Fox soon became as deeply pledged as before.

who belonged to fashionable life ; and Paris seems to have been the emporium whence the choicest articles of the wardrobe were obtained, often through a contraband channel. George Selwyn, then living at Paris, was the chief purveyor to the fancies of his London friends. Lord Thynne writes to him for a *recherché* waistcoat, to be sent to Dessein's, at Calais. The Hon. St. John Bolingbroke has a commission for chinaware ; in the same epistle owning that in one "so poor it is ridiculous to think of being a patriot."* The Earl of March, who was the great dash of his time, and the cleverest both on the turf, at the table, and in the slips of the opera, has several orders. December 1766, he writes, "Pray bring me a dozen of the kind of gloves I bought at Dulac's. They are lined with a kind of wash-leather, and the tops were lined in the inside with silk." A few days later he "prays" for "two or three bottles of perfume, to put amongst powder. I wish, also, you would bring me some patterns of spring velvets and silk for furs, and that you would make inquiry at Calais about my black silk coat lined with an *Astrakan*." Then the "danseuse" is not forgotten. "A dozen pairs of silk stockings for Zamperini, of a very small size, and with embroidered clocks. I should also be glad to have some riband, a cap, or something or other for her of that sort. She is but fifteen. You may advise with Lady Rochford, who will choose something that may be fit for her."†

The Earl of March, a lord of the bedchamber to George III., is best known as the Duke of Queensberry, of Piccadilly notoriety half a century past. He lived to a great age, and died immensely rich. Though a sensualist who despised the opinion of the world, he was —

* Selwyn Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 102.

† Ibid, p. 12.

rather an unusual characteristic of his class — not without generosity, and was eminently shrewd in judgment. In one letter he reproves his friend Selwyn for preaching against Voltaire, who he says “has done more good by his writings upon tolerance than all the priests in Europe.”

Among the random adventures of the day may be mentioned the marriage of Lord Coventry with the beautiful Maria Gunning, at Mayfair Chapel, at half an hour after midnight, with a ring of the bed-curtain. Another nuptial extraordinary was the marriage of a sister of Lord Rockingham with John Sturgeon, the footman, and whose company she had kept under the pretext of teaching him mathematics. The lady, however, had the prudent forecast to settle all her property, so that John should only have a disposing power over a hundred pound annuity. A Duke of Hamilton is spoken of as the “abstract of Scotch pride;” he and the duchess (also a Gunning, — there were three besides) “walk into dinner before their company; sit together at the upper end of the table; eat off the same plate; and drink to nobody under the rank of an earl.”* These must have been eccentrics of *Le Crème* of a mediæval type, and long obsolete.

The Selwyn coterie was a living representative of the time, inclining a little perhaps above the average to the epicurean sty, but gems of fine polish by which the *dramatis personæ* of the fashionable comedy and novel were sought to be set; rather too dissolute for present taste, but of the high patrician cast, and gentlemen by birth, fortune, social connection, and collegiate education. They were patrons of the fine arts; but it has been remarked of them † that they seldom refer to the literati then living, whose memories are cherished by a grateful posterity.

* Selwyn Correspondence, vol. i. p. 172.

† Edinburgh Review, July, 1844.

The chief connecting links with literature were Mr. Fox, who was always classical, and Topham Beauclerk, both members of the Literary Club, and the latter wit enough not to fear the thunder of Dr. Samuel Johnson. George Selwyn, Horace Walpole, and one or two more, had the *entrée* to the circle of *bel esprits* who assembled to eat their suppers at Madame du Deffand's, and where they met the gayest, most polished, and learned of European society. This ancient dame, who was quite blind, and lived to upwards of eighty, was mirthful to the last. Walpole is grateful to Selwyn for being introduced to so celebrated a memento of the Orleans regency, and says (Dec. 2. 1765), "I was in your debt before for making over Madame du Deffand to me, who is delicious; that is, as often as I can get her fifty years back. She is as eager about what happens every day, as I am about the last century." But the advanced philosophy of Paris was too much for the lively epistoler of Strawberry Hill, especially the light which at that period appears to have dawned in the new science of geology. "I forgot to tell you that I sometimes go to Baron d'Olbach's; but I have left off his dinners, as there was no bearing the authors, and philosophers, and servants, of which he has a pigeon-house full. They soon turned my head with a new system of antediluvian deluges, which they have invented to prove the eternity of matter. The Baron is persuaded that Pall Mall is paved with lava or deluge stones."*

Happiness was the end and aim of the gay philosophers and accomplished voluptuaries of both Paris and London; but, perfect, it was not reached.

"Man never is but always to be blessed."

* Selwyn Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 9.

Life had then, as it continues to have, its bitters and dark shades. A Duke of Devonshire dying of satiety at forty-five, with 45,000*l.* a-year to make all sweet around him, is one melancholy instance. Gilly Williams's *memento mori* upon the catastrophe may be quoted. "My reflection is, that it is a folly to be unhappy at anything when felicity itself is such a phantom." Human happiness, however, is no phantom, but it does not lie in extremes either way, of luxury or want. Had the old maxim of "nothing over much" been more in the ascendant in the early Georgian era, gout, dropsy, indigestion, and apoplexy would not have been such fatal visitors as they were to "Selwyn and his Contemporaries." But the free living of the age had results only appreciable by the more advanced physiology of the present time. Two or three bottles of port a day, or half a dozen, which is said to have been Sir John Irwin's ration, must needs have been adverse to longevity, and prolific of diseases and sudden deaths.

The love of conviviality was not limited to fashionables whose sole devotion was to pleasure; it extended freely to church dignitaries, full-beneficed clergymen, high officials, and members of parliament; and helps to solve some of the political as well as physical phenomena puzzling to contemporaries. Dyspepsia was a prevalent malady of the distinguished leaders of both Houses. The second Pitt sunk under it: "He died," says Malmesbury, "of old age at forty-six, as much as if he had been ninety."* His passion was for wine; he loved a glass, but was wont to say "a bottle is better;" and his friends could not easily stop him in his potations.† The elder Pitt was wont to indulge in copious libations of strong

* Lord Malmesbury's Diary, vol. iv. p. 346.

† Pellew's Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. i. pp. 152, 153.

ale, which may have produced the stomach disorders to which the Earl of Chatham was often subject. They may, with gout, have entered largely into the curious fit of insanity which in 1765 visited him, real or feigned ; for his lordship could act many parts, as courtier or demagogue, servile or arrogant, as best suited.* Gentlemen, too, of the House of Commons were wont to expatiate in after-dinner speeches of a singular or equivocal import. One is related of the clever Charles Townshend, in which he poured forth such a torrent of wit, humour, caricature, classical allusion, sense, buffoonery, and farce, as astonished everybody. It became the talk of the town : “Did you hear Charles Townshend’s champagne speech ?” was the universal question.† It may be doubted, however, whether Horace has got, or at least revealed, the bottom of this amusing display. Like Hamlet’s madness, there may have been a purpose in the vinous fermentation of Townshend. True, he entered the House with a black patch over one eye, and seemed the worse for liquor ; but under shelter of these he indulged a “safe malignity,” letting off, among his other crackers, a stinging portraiture of the characters of Chatham, Shelburne, and Rockingham. Though fond of the bottle, Sir George Colebrooke, who had dined with him that day, says he had been rather abstemious, and the speech he ventilated was one he had “meditated a great while upon.”

To return to George III. What has been said of the court pertains to its earliest and more sombre aspect. Gayer scenes opened, by the Prince of Wales and Duke of York attaining their majorities, and the rise of the princesses into womanhood. The Prince was the prince of good fellows ; he became the choice companion of the

* Memoirs of George III. vol. iv. p. 34. *note* ; Ibid. vol. iii. pp. 41—45.

† Memoirs by Walpole, vol. iii. p. 25.

convivial and accomplished, and won all hearts ; appeared familiarly on the turf and at the club-houses, and attended the brilliant *soirées* of Devonshire House, where he was charmed with the wit of Selwyn and his companions, or the mellifluous notes of Wilberforce the new M.P. for Hull, and just launched in the gay world. The icyness of the court was now thawed ; even Queen Charlotte became hospitable and condescending, dined with the citizens at Guildhall, resplendent in diamonds ; gave *fêtes champêtre* at Frogmore, where the princesses were amused with Dutch fairs, the feats of tumblers and fortune-tellers. St. George's Hall often rung with the festive gatherings of the scions of nobility, met to commemorate a royal birthday, a house-warming, or other joyous occasion. The good king did his part ; delighted the Weymouth people with his autumnal immersions* ; kept up the old English customs of early dinners and early risings ; shone at militia and volunteer reviews in the Windsor uniform ; took vigorous equestrian exercise ; chatted familiarly with the farmers, with Dr. Beattie, the great lexicographer Johnson, Joseph Lancaster the popular educationist ; and was delighted at the evening promenade on the castle terrace, in the midst of his lieges and his children, allowed to be the finest royal family in Europe.

These were the *beaux jours* of the court. They were also the palmy days of a splendid aristocracy, by which it was decorated, and its perpetuity guaranteed. Next to the throne the nobility commanded all that could be de-

* "Think," says Madame d'Arblay, "but of the surprise of his majesty, when, the first time of bathing, he had no sooner popped his royal head under water than a band of music, concealed in a neighbouring machine, struck up 'God save great George our king.'" — *Diary*, July, 1789.

sired ; they had titles, worship, and troops of friends ; there was no third party to challenge their social or political supremacy ; they had no rivals even in riches, for they had the broad acres which constituted a much larger proportion than at present of the wealth of the community ; they had also the boroughs, the church and municipal corporations, army, navy, public offices, and both Houses of Parliament ; they had even the populace of the towns, for everything was either Whig or Tory, or nothing. Parliamentary elections were theirs ; the people were not troubled with the choice of representatives, or hardly the labour of thought, all being done for them by their patrician guardians, or their clever retainers, who, like Burke, Francis, Johnson, and Sheridan, employed their pens and tongues in the advocacy of their patrons. The borough elections were settled at Boodle's or the Cocoa Tree, and the counties were often a drawing-room arrangement. Mr. Wilberforce says, "Sir George Saville was chosen member for Yorkshire by the Whig grandees, in the Marquis of Rockingham's dining-room."* "In these days they kept up a vast deal of state, and the great men all drove up in their carriages and six."†

These displays were the expiring reflex of mediæval grandeur, and with other social demonstrations continued to maintain distinctions of caste. In the fashionable world of London other demarcations kept up a severance of classes. One of the most prominent institutes for guarding against the intrusion of *parvenus* was the establishment of clubs, to which none below a certain grade were eligible. These were common in the time of the "Tatler" and "Spectator ;" and the courtly class, who, with

* Life of Wilberforce, by his Sons, vol. i. p. 56.

† Ibid. p. 51.

the learned professions and the more distinguished of the literati, frequented the coffee-houses of St. James's, discriminated as they were by a marked difference of costume, were tolerably secure against vulgar intrusion. Early in the present reign the principal clubs were White's, Brookes's, and Almacks'. The two former were partly political, and established on somewhat the same plan as the fashionable clubs continue to be at present. The general expenditure and providings were met upon the joint-stock principle, each member paying at a fixed rate for what he consumed. Almacks' was first opened in 1765; it was a subscription club, in which a member for ten guineas had a ball and supper once a week for twelve weeks.* The opening was not very promising. Horace Walpole writes, Feb. 14.—“The new assembly room at Almacks' was opened the night before last, and they say is very magnificent, but it was empty; half the town is ill with colds.” The other places of resort sought to be kept exclusive were the Pantheon, the Opera, Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and the Academy's Exhibition. But money is all-potent, and wealthy oppidans soon found means to elbow the aristocracy in their choicest assemblies. Indeed, exclusiveness is not without its drawbacks; self-adoration alone must be dull, if not unsatisfactory; and if there be annoyance there is also incense from the multitude. What would a stage performance be without pit and gallery? and the ostentation of rank and affluence is not less vapid and futile unaccompanied by the excitement of popular admiration. The Opera, from high prices of admission, the foreign character of the entertainment, and from being usually supported by a guarantee fund in the form of subscription, seems peculiarly reserved for the

* Selwyn and his Contemporaries, vol. i. p. 36.

upper classes. But even in this there was a connecting link; there was an accomplished musical public, chiefly connected with cathedral choirs, and to them the Italian opera was sufficiently attractive to render it neutral ground for the higher and middle classes to meet upon. The rage for this exotic entertainment had at this time risen to an extravagant pitch, and was lavishly paid for. A Signor Manzoli cleared at the Haymarket by his benefit, in March, 1765, a thousand guineas after paying all expenses. One fond admirer complimented the singer with a 200*l.* note for a single ticket on the occasion. But Farinelli was the reigning favourite, and of whom it is related a lady of fashion in a transport exclaimed, "One God, one Farinelli!" Happily this outrageous idolatry was cut short by the removal of its idol, invited by the Queen of Spain to administer to the maladies of Philip V., suffering from extreme dejection of spirits. This unhappy prince had fallen into such self-abandonment that he was not only neglectful of public affairs, but his own person, and would not allow his attendants to dress or shave him. He was, however, charmed into life by the rich vocalism of the Italian, and Farinelli amply rewarded by his royal patient.* It may be added that music and song did not wholly engross fashionable patronage. Lectures, such as those of the first Sheridan on oratory, had entered into the round of high-life amusements.

The relation of classes, which has been alluded to, was only a novelty in the form, not a new feature, of social life. For centuries the burgess order had been pressing on the aristocratic domain. It was the rise of cities and towns which gradually undermined feudal exclusiveness. Urban encroachments were accelerated by

* Hogarth's *Memoirs of the Opera*, vol. i. p. 307. *Memoirs of the Court and Aristocracy of Austria*, vol. ii. p. 201.

the surprising mechanical discoveries of the present reign. It was the spinning-frame and smoke of the steam-engine which dimmed the lustre of the nobility. They were doubtless made richer by the change; their lands in the vicinity of towns increased immensely in value, and the mineral wealth on their estates was made vastly productive; but in the aggregate, and in relation to other classes, they became poorer. Accompanied as these inventions were by the rise of Dissent and Radicalism, they lessened the prestige of rank in the aristocracy, as well as deprived it of the autocracy of wealth and power it before possessed. It still, however, continues a magnificent pillar of the state whose condition needs no commiseration. It is not so much that the nobility have declined, as that other classes have risen to compete with them; and if their exclusiveness has been encroached upon, it has been compensated by a vast increase of enjoyments over their ancestors, and that enviable social distinction which they continue to retain by courtesy and general deference to rank, if not so absolutely by undeniable pretensions.

The increase of national riches from commercial and manufacturing sources under George III. was attended with the natural sequel of a vast increase in the luxurious arts. Horticulture, architecture, music, painting, and sculpture, were munificently encouraged. Splendid mansions rose in every part of the country, replete with every enjoyment and convenience that wealth, art, and science could produce. It was about the middle of the king's reign that the nobility and successful commercialists, Angerstein, Beckford, Methuen, and Ellis, began to form those magnificent galleries of art that are now the astonishment and admiration of foreigners. The superb collections of some of the French noblesse and of their

farmers-general, as well as those of Holland and Belgium, dispersed by political revolutions, found ready purchasers in this opulent country ; and the result is, that not only in cabinet pictures, but pictures of all kinds, England is now considered to be the richest depository of the works of the great masters in the world. Luxury and improvement were rife in every thing and among all classes. Private carriages, country-seats, and pleasure horses multiplied. The hours of application were shortened ; merchants and the better class of tradespeople, in lieu of their ledgers and counters, devoted the afternoon to wine, music, literature, or the theatres. Employments were more nicely subdivided ; and in easement of their superiors, more superintendants, clerks, overseers, bailiffs, stewards, valets, footmen, and ladies' maids, were kept than formerly. In towns, in-door apprenticeships became less frequent, and in the country there was less of yearly hiring, and the farmer and yeoman no longer sat down in common fellowship, at a common board, with his hind and husbandman. There were also great meliorations during the war in the condition of the labouring, handicraft, and artificer classes. Their clothing, lodging, furniture, and diet improved. If their masters exchanged the spinnet and harpsichord for the more dulcet notes of the piano or guitar, the treenware, the wooden spoon and trencher, and the pewter platter, disappeared from cottages ; and, what is more, that infallible sign of plebeian luxury, the wheaten loaf, after battling against the rye, the barley, and oaten, in the south, at last wended its way from the Thames to the Tees, and is now struggling onward to the Highlands, the Firth of Forth, and John O'Groats.

A later period evinced signs of moral as well as physical advancement. Intemperance began to decline

among the superior classes in England, if not in Scotland and Ireland. One third of the gentlemen, even in the best society, were not, as the Rev. Sydney Smith avouches in his "Memoirs," always drunk, and a visitor no longer feared disobligeing his host by leaving his table sober. Punch, that jolly but deleterious wassail-bowl in which loan-mongers and contractors used to pledge pottle deep to the victories of Howe, St. Vincent, Jervis, and Bronte, disappeared. Wine was drunk in moderation, and more as a condiment to conversation than for the purpose of intoxication. Tavern duels ceased, and gentlemen who wore swords were compelled to adjourn the settlement of their disputes to Chalk Farm, Putney, or Battersea. There was less of the wild justice of nature allowed ; street fights were fewer ; petty thieves were not allowed to be pumped upon or dragged through a horse-pond ; nor juvenile delinquents scourged or maimed at the mercy of individuals. In short, men were not suffered to adjudicate upon their wrongs agreeably to their passions or interests, but were compelled to bring them before a suitable tribunal, by which the nominal amount of criminality was augmented, but strife and ill-blood among neighbours prevented, and greater order and security obtained. Police was rendered more efficient and better organised. That great opprobrium of London, the trading justices, whose harvest was fees, arbitrarily exacted, were superseded by a stipendiary magistracy, who being independent of suitors, and their hours of attendance and places of session fixed, justice was assured, and more impartially administered. Under this system, suggested by Sir Nathaniel Conant, and adopted by Mr. Secretary Dundas in 1792; great improvements were effected in the metropolis and neighbourhood. Travelling in the night became almost as secure as by day, and those gangs of disorderlies—footpads, prostitutes, demireps, and

thieves—that used to congregate at Ranelagh, Apollo's Garden, and other places of licentious resort, were dispersed, or reduced to a state of discipline less publicly dangerous and offensive.

There were improvements in Costume as well as in manners and behaviour. Various extravagances in attire survived Queen Anne and the first two Georges. In the reign of Anne the dress of noblemen and gentlemen consisted of square-cut coats, and long-flapped waistcoats meeting the stockings, drawn over the knees so high as to conceal the breeches, but gartered below them; large hanging cuffs and lace ruffles; the skirts of the coat stiffened out with wire or buckram, from between which peeped out the hilt of the sword. Blue or scarlet silk stockings with gold or silver clocks, square-toed shoes with high red heels and small buckles, very long and formally curled perukes, with three-cornered hats laced with gold or silver, completed the outer man. The tie-wig and pigtail were the additions of the next two reigns. George III.'s reign began with a large cocked hat, called a Kevenhüller, imported from Germany, some of which were open before, like a coal-scuttle, or the scales flour is weighed in. Gold-laced hats were said* to have been general in 1775 and 1778, and were adopted by many as a military distinction, or to escape the pressgangs that were busy in the latter year.

It may appear rather beneath the subject to dwell on the attire of a nation, in a work whose main purpose is to trace the progress of its civilisation. But I am far from considering of trivial importance the prevalent costume. Almost the entire industry and mechanical ingenuity of every people are directed to the production of the two

* History of British Costume, p. 314.

great essentials of food and clothing ; and I am not sure whether the clothing and ornamentation of the person do not occupy in anxious cares the largest proportion of the British population. The *plumage* is manifestly a prime distinction throughout animated life ; and the question was once raised with an affirmative leaning by Madame de Staël, whether Nature in her infinite variety had not been equally intent on the production of beauty as utility. But as man in the order of creation takes imperial rank, it certainly behoves him more than any species to be mindful that his external appearance and manners do not belie his assumed dignity of position. Outward show, however, is not alone concerned : it is health, comfort, ease and agreeableness to ourselves and all around us, which are comprehended in the vital article of elegant and suitable attire. Impressed with this view of the importance of costume, I have no hesitation in ranking the art of dress and its aptness in material, style, fit, and colour, to the climate, season, age, sex, and condition of the wearer, as a branch of the Fine Arts, and not the least worthy of them for the exercise of taste, ingenuity, and skill. Therefore, I shall not consider further apology necessary for continuing a little further the account of costumal changes in England.

The French revolution inaugurated a new epoch in the outer man, as well as in his inward spirit and sentiment. Royalty and its modes were at a discount, and an artificial stateliness was replaced by an entire negligence of the person. Charles James Fox, who earlier in life had been the glass of fashion, was among the first to imbibe with republican notions its plainness of dress, and appeared on the benches of the Opposition in a blue frock and buff waistcoat. In 1789 the shirt collar appeared and the ruffle vanished. About the same time round hats began

to be worn, with pantaloons, Hessian boots, cropped hair, and shoe-strings ; the wig went out, and there was no more frizzing, plastering, and powdering the hair. Short boots and loose trousers—great improvements on their predecessors—are due to a later visitation, that of the Cossacks after the peace. The changes in ladies' dress are too numerous and evanescent to follow. They continued to wear white stockings in mourning till 1778 ; cut off their tresses, and exhibited rounded heads *à la guillotine*, in memory of Marie Antoinette ; hair powder was discarded by Queen Charlotte and the princesses in 1793, and rapidly disappeared from the toilette. The large hoop was only worn at court or in full dress towards the close of the eighteenth century. George IV. abolished the court hoop.

The changes of fashion often caused great distress among workmen. In 1765 the peace of the metropolis was disturbed by the peruke-makers, who went in procession to petition the king against the innovation of people wearing their own hair. At the recovery of George III., after his first illness, an immense number of buckles were manufactured ; they were spread over the whole kingdom. All the wealth of Walsall was invested in the speculation. The king went to St. Paul's without buckles,—shoestrings supplied their place, and Walsall was nearly ruined. The disuse of wigs, leather breeches, buckles, and buttons is supposed to have affected the industry of a million of persons.

Traces of changes of costume, of the dominant passion of the age, and its most notable characters, are almost invariably preserved by an ultra-presentment of them in Caricatures, Songs, and Satires. They characterised and enlivened in a remarkable degree the reign of King George. Caricatures, which are pictorial exaggerations, a *reductio ad absurdum* of scenes and persons, their

habits and conduct, appeal most vividly to the popular apprehension of the ludicrous. The favourite subjects to the artists of fun were the *sans-culotte* extravagances of the French revolutionists ; and at home the coalition of North and Fox, the fiscal devices of Minister Pitt, the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and the “ Alarmists.” It was the popular belief that Hastings had bribed the Court of St. James’s with presents of diamonds of large size, and in great profusion, to shelter his Indian delinquencies. Caricatures on this subject were to be seen in every print-shop. In one of these Hastings is represented wheeling away in a barrow the king, with his crown and sceptre, observing, “What a man buys he may sell;” and in another the king is represented on his knees, with his mouth wide open, Hastings pitching diamonds into it.* A common representation of the king and queen was as “ Farmer George and his Wife ;” his majesty’s familiarity of manner, general somnolency, Weymouth displays, and his prying into cottage domesticities,—to wit, the mystery of the seamless apple-dumpling,—afforded unfailing hits for Peter Pindar, Sayer, and Gilray, as George’s II.’s homely humour had done for Hogarth. The dissipation of the Prince of Wales suggested his portrayal as “The Prodigal Son,” the prince’s feathers in the mire, and the inscription on his garter reduced to the word “honi.” In one print a Brighton party is represented,—“The Jovial Crew, or Merry Beggars;” among the prince’s convives are Mrs. Fitzherbert, Fox, Sheridan, Lord North, and Captain Morris,—“Jolly companions every one.”

A scarce print of Gilray’s commemorates a grand

* Wright’s England under the House of Hanover ; illustrated by Caricatures and Satires, vol. ii. p. 138. A curious and interesting work on this branch of national history.

installation of knights at Westminster Abbey, May 19. 1788, and is called “The Installation Supper,” given at the Pantheon, the favourite scene of festive gatherings, masquerades, and assemblies. It brings out the chief notorieties of the day, exhibiting them in separate groups, simulating, over the bottle, an obliviousness of political jealousies ; Pitt and Fox hob-nobbing behind the back of the gruff chancellor Thurlow ; Lord Shelburne is shaking hands jesuitically with Lord Sydney ; Lord Derby is hand and glove with Lady Mountedgecumbe, an antiquated *blue*, who still dreams of conquests ; the prince is besieged by Lady Archer (of gambling notoriety) on one side, and Lady Cecilia Johnson on the other ; while Mrs. Fitzherbert is in amiable confab with the ex-patriot, Alderman Wilkes :—

“ Johnny Wilkes, Johnny Wilkes,
Thou greatest of bilks,
How changed are the notes you now sing ;
Your famed Forty-five
Is Prerogative,
And your blasphemy, ‘God save the king.’ ”*

Public characters of eminence did not escape the lash of the caricaturist. Edmund Burke always appears with

* Ascribed to Sheridan (*Memoirs and Correspondence of Moore*, vol. ii. p. 312.). The unprincipled character of the alderman hardly admits of dispute, but he had some good qualities ; and in his early public career he obtained for the Press, and civil freedom generally, concessions which a less unscrupulous or more timid claimant might have failed to achieve. The character of his pungent satirist has been sometimes questioned ; but I believe, in respect of political integrity, Mr. Sheridan’s own testimony may be accepted. He was a frequent visitor at the White House, Richmond Park, during the Addington ministry. On one occasion he said to Lord Sidmouth, “ My visits to you may be possibly misconstrued by my friends ; but I hope you know, Mr. Addington, that I have an unpurchaseable mind.” — *Memoirs of Lord Sidmouth*, by the late Bishop of Carlisle, vol. ii. p. 105.

a long pointed nose and spectacles; in one large print by Gilray * he is discharging a blunderbuss at Hastings, who is defending himself with the "shield of honour." The thin meagre figure of Pitt was a fruitful matter for jest, no less than that of his fat slovenly opponent Fox. An equivocal phrase of the prime minister, Mr. Wright says, gave rise to the caricature by Gilray of the "Bottomless Pitt;" or it may have been the financial profundity of the minister, or the wit of his celebrated housekeeper niece, which originated the print. It was apt either way; but the subjoined elucidation seems to have escaped the research of Mr. Wright:—

" William Pitt, 'tis known by many people,
Was thin as a lath and tall as a steeple;
And so spare his behind, he was called (with some wit),
By famed Lady Hester, 'the bottomless pitt.'"

Gregory's Satirist.

The public taste for caricature has continued uninterruptedly, and been spiritedly kept up by "Figaro" and "Punch" to our own times. It had a brilliant interlude under the Regency and George IV., when in the "House that Jack Built" and the "Man in the Moon," the Regent, Sidmouth, Canning, and Castlereagh, formed the comic *dramatis personæ* of the popular cuts of George Cruikshank and William Hone. But it is time to return to an earlier period and more serious theme.

The social tableau of the reign of George III. would be incomplete without an advertence to the state of religion, which presented different aspects at the beginning and towards the middle and end of the reign of the king. At the former period there was much avowed scepticism both among public characters and public writers of eminence. Dr. Johnson and his satellites

* Preserved in Mr. Wright's History, vol. ii. p. 150.

of rhetoricians, grammarians, and essayists, were pious; but Hume, Gibbon, and other philosophical writers were known infidels. All metaphysical researches, however, that had a tendency to shake the established faith and morality, were discountenanced after the outbreak of the French revolution. The higher classes, from fear, as well as loyalty to the king, became exemplary in their religious professions; and the faith of their inferiors was cherished by missionary societies, Bible societies, and tract societies. Either from the same political cause, or from the example and rivalry of the Methodists and other sectaries, the conduct of the established clergy underwent a contemporary change. They became more decorous, more exemplary in morals, and more zealous and active in the discharge of their pastoral duties. They lost, notwithstanding, the populace of the towns; which, however, was partly made up to them by rich dissenters occasionally deserting their ranks and joining the church.

Mr. Wilberforce, judging of religion and morality according to his own standard, which was not exactly the standard of the Protestant Reformation, but more allied to Puseyism, or John Knoxism, thought both had declined during the war. At Manchester he found church attendance much diminished, particularly in the afternoon. Sunday had become a more frequent travelling day with merchants. But of another provincial town he says,— “The manners of Leeds are remarkably frugal, sober, and commercial. None of the merchants spend money, and it would be discreditable to attend public places.”—“An increasing evil at Sheffield is, that the apprentices used to live with their masters, and be of the family; now, their wives are grown too fine ladies to like it.”*

* Life by his Sons, vol. ii. p. 164.

This was in 1796; and the changes described may be traced to other causes than the decrease of piety, namely, to augmented wealth and intelligence, and their natural result — lust of aristocratic assimilations, of which Mr. Wilberforce himself, who was one of the burgess order, was no bad type in his time, in his predilections in favour of rank and power.

About the progress of social amelioration in one direction, though it pertains to a subsequent period, there can be no hesitation. Next to railways, steam-navigation, and telegraph lines, humanity is the most prominent feature of the age, and in this our sympathies have not been limited to our own country or our own species, but have nearly embraced the entire creation. The abolition of African slavery and the slave trade, at a great sacrifice of material interests, is a memorable triumph of philanthropy. The capital punishment of criminals has been all but abolished, being reserved only for murderers and one or other description of offenders of the worst class. The humanity of legislation has extended its protecting ægis even to animals—to the treatment of cattle and the canine race. In the decline of brutalising sports there is evidence of the prevailing tendency. Pugilism, cock-fighting, bull, bear, and badger baiting, if not wholly extinct, have ceased to be patronised by any reputable section of society. In lieu of diversions tending to exacerbate the viler and coarser passions, juvenile reformatorys, public walks, museums, galleries of art, free libraries and botanical gardens, have been formed, and mechanics' institutions and halls of science established.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GEORGE III.—SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND THE FINE ARTS.

Causes of the Vicissitudes of Genius.—*Retrospection; England behind, but improves on her Models.*—*Intellectual Characteristics of the Georgian Age.*—*Revival and Exhaustion of Ethical Essays, Magazines, and Reviews.*—*Abandoned Departments of Science; Metaphysics of Reid and Dugald Stewart.*—*The Modern Novel.*—*Services rendered to Literature and Society by the Standard Histories of Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson.*—*Adam Smith on Political Economy, and Sir William Blackstone on Law and Jurisprudence.*—*Dr. Paley, Godwin, and Rousseau.*—*Poetical Transition from Goldsmith, Cowper, and Darwin to Scott, Moore, Burns, and Byron.*—*Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture.*—*The English School of Reynolds.*—*Banks, Nollekins, and Flaxman.*—*Music and the Italian Opera.*

THE mental and artistical progress of a people opens many and interesting fields of inquiry. Not the least curious is the generation of intellect. Is the genius that signalises an age usually a single or double star; or does it appear in constellations of one central and surpassing light, whose vivifying force quickens into existence inferior luminaries of less overpowering radiance? This is one branch of the subject on which an ingenious thesis with pertinent examples might be readily put forth, rich, poor, or intermediate. Another is the nature of the soil in which the mind does most fructify and delight to dwell, whether in peace or war, amidst the din of arms, or in the hot ferment of religious or political strife. Or is it independent of all or any of these, and a free gift by Nature of a favourite child, which, at uncertain times and places, she vouchsafes to gladden, enlighten, and lead

onward the human family? And then as a sequel to such investigations is the inverse problem,—Why is the blessing withdrawn? Why should a nation once vigorous, fertile, and varied in mind, that has put forth all the flowers and fruit of genius,—why should its glories become dim, degenerate, and extinct? Does the failure of perpetuity arise from want of culture or encouragement, or is it only in obedience to the general law of life, death, and resurrection which governs universal creation?

All these inquiries or heads of chapters must be passed over. England, as I have more than once remarked, has been fertile in illustrations, and Science, Literature, and the Arts form no exception in her career of manifestations. Sometimes we have shone with a borrowed lustre. Italy in the seventeenth century was our example and precursor in philosophy, poetry, and the arts; and France at a later period was before us, if not in sterling qualities, in the courtly polish, gaiety, and enjoyments of social intercourse. But if we borrowed, we repaid with high interest—mighty and rapidly improved upon our models, besides exulting in native originals, whose honoured fronts may proudly peer in any court, palace, or urbane precinct. Aided by the primitive fathers of our intellectual renown, we speedily rose in foreign estimation; from followers became leaders in knowledge, and offered such examples for guidance as the world did not disdain to accept and honour. The great Lord Bacon was doubtless in the van of the movement; he pointed the way to victory; but a greater than Bacon in grandeur of discovery was the immortal Sir Isaac Newton; and next to him, inferior in splendour, but perhaps more useful in research, was John Locke, who set himself down cautiously to observe and digest from Hobbes and his own individuality the phenomena of mental operations, and

inculcate the true principles of religious toleration and political government.

The celebrity of these illustrious triumvirs elevated England into the foremost place in the great domains of morals, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. But other fields were to be won. Man has a sympathising soul, as well as reasoning mind, and cannot live by bread alone. Singly the intellect is light, without heat, warms not, centres in self, and if unallied, as nature intended, with the heart, the fancy and imagination is dull, inert, and joyless. In such isolation the touch of Prospero's wand is needed, and England had it in her noble cluster of national dramatists—Shakspeare, Jonson, Marlow, and Massinger—who gilded with ethereal brightness, and cheered with social glee, the triumphant reign of Queen Elizabeth. In this sunburst of genius the nation had few exotic partakers: unlike the philosophers, our early poets were native and to the manner born, and only imperfectly admitted in spirit and form of transfusion among neighbouring states.

The bright summer of Elizabeth was fated to be sadly overcast. Literature itself indeed is a dramatic presentment, and the scene is perpetually changing. Generally, however, some ascendant spirit or principal figure engrosses the chief interest of the performance. It is poetry at one time, science and philosophy at another, and next perhaps theology. The last has been the stock piece from the earliest period in national representation, and was sturdily maintained by the successor of the maiden queen. It was a transition, but not an intellectual advance. The people had their glorious dramatists; but with the first Stuart came a dense cloud of pedantry, which the light shed by Bacon could only partially penetrate, and which enveloped the royal court in "verbal

criticism and solemn quibble." Controversy became rife, and continued hot and furious into the next reign, finally exploding in the great civil conflict of the seventeenth century. The tracts issued during these religious fermentations were collected by a bookseller (Tomlinson) to the amount of 30,000; this enormous lot of 2000 volumes was bargained for by Charles II., but not bought; eventually it was bought by George III., and presented to the British Museum. Pending the strife of the lay and ecclesiastical powers, no opening was left for science or *belles lettres*. The limited demand for any publication unconnected with the dominant agitation may be learnt from the little popularity enjoyed by Milton's metrical productions, and the fact mentioned by Dr. Johnson, that from 1623 to 1664 the nation was satisfied with two editions of Shakspeare, which together probably did not amount to 1000 copies.* Wholesome literature did not benefit by the Restoration; it was a transition from one extreme to another—from a conclave to Paphos—and it became only the toy of a libertine king, his courtesans and gallants, who sought to divert their weariness with wits and savans, as monarchs were wont to do with their jesters. Charles II. and his followers brought hither the spirit of the literary favourites of Louis XIV., with whom the great was everything, and the people nothing save a slumbering volcano. Under this kind of favour, letters, with a few grand exceptions, put on the lowest garb in which they can be arrayed—flaunted in meretricious finery—to pander to the swell-mob of St. James's, or the

* Our great national poet fared better than our great natural philosopher. Twenty-seven years elapsed between the publication of the first and second edition of the "Principia" of Newton, which comprised his wonderful exposition of the solar system.

hardly more degraded assemblage congregated nightly at the Globe and Blackfriars theatres.

These revolting aspects in mental development may not have been all loss. If they offered no examples to follow, there may have been some to shun. The ingredients themselves may not have been wholly poisonous, but only too exclusively predominant, and the amalgam which next issued may be accepted as the fixed result of the austerities of the Puritans and the license of the Cavaliers. The Augustan age of Queen Anne had, in addition to an instructive experience of the danger of extremes, another advantage which seems almost inseparable from success in any public pursuit. What I mean is the emancipation of letters from partial interests. Literature, to be enduring and generally useful, must be based, as previously remarked, on the popular demand; and this was created under Anne by the essayists. These pioneered the way for a higher class of periodical miscellany in the *Magazine*, as a more permanent repository for their fugitive half-sheets, and the choicer articles of the newspapers. The first of these was the "Gentleman's Magazine," the only survivor of its generation, and was started by Cave in 1731. Other magazines followed: one of them, the "Magazine of Magazines," attempted, by giving the pith of its monthly contemporaries, to do the same by them as the "Gentleman's" had done by the newspapers and the essayists. With the magazines originated a new class of writers, known as the Critics *, who at first only gave monthly lists of new publications, but extended their vocation to abstracts, and then to notices of their merits or deficiencies. The "Monthly Review," begun in 1749, was the first of this class of periodicals, and

* England under the House of Hanover, by Thomas Wright, M. A., vol. i. p. 304.

was followed by the "Critical Review," conducted by the celebrated Smollett. They were viewed with jealousy by authors, as a self-constituted and irresponsible tribunal, but there is little doubt of their favourable influence on letters. Both literature and the literary character were elevated by the periodicals; they did not create poets, novelists, or philosophers, but they prevented kings and courtiers from pretending to create them. "Un Auguste peut aisement faire un Virgile," was the unctuous delusion addressed by Bossuet to the vainglorious Louis XIV.*

These generalities may be sufficient to connect antecedent literary notices with the time of the third George. Differing from preceding periods, the intellectual character of this long term of sixty years may be characterised as universal. It was not science, poetry, or the arts that alone shone; it was a general illumination by which the mental horizon on all sides was extended. Yet all was not represented or maintained; there were disappearances, though they may be considered by some rather a gain than a loss to society. Theology was at last entombed; it expired about the middle of the reign with those accomplished gladiators, Warburton, Conyers Middleton, and Bishop Horsley, and did not become a conspicuous

* After a dangerous illness this misled monarch permitted Boileau and Racine to amuse him by reading aloud some passages of the history of his reign which Madame Montespan had engaged them to write. "The king heard them seated between his two mistresses—the history of Louis le Grand, commended by himself, planned by his mistress, and executed by two pensioned poets." (*Lady Morgan's France*.) The royal libertine who revoked the edict of Nantes was extolled by Bossuet as the champion of religion, his queen as the Virgin Mary, and the dauphin as her divine son. Had the Bourbon and Stuart dynasties been perpetuated, at what pitch of civilisation would now have been the two principal western states of Europe? Little beyond, it may be surmised, that of Naples, Spain, or Austria.

feature of the time during the remainder of the king's life. A kindred topic also descended among the Capulets,—it was Ethics. An old science this: it began with the Greek sages, and was well and seasonably inculcated by them on the first emergence of mankind from the barbarous state. In principles they left little to discover or to teach. Adults are familiar with their precepts, and juveniles ought to be made so; and all that remains is practice, to which men must be disciplined by good manners and politic laws. It was the dry bones of the ancients the Essayists sought to clothe in flesh and blood, and fashion to the wants of their age. They succeeded admirably, and by apt stories, examples, and contrasted portraiture of life, blended amusement with instruction. The practice was revived in the latter years of the reign of George II. by the publication of "The Rambler," "The Adventurer," "Connoisseur," and "The World," and continued up to 1760, when the effort was terminated by "The Idler" and "Adventurer." Besides Drs. Johnson and Hawksworth, who were the principals in these periodicals, Lord Chesterfield, Horace Walpole, and Soame Jenyns were occasional contributors. If not inferior in merit or purpose, these revived periodical monitors failed in the novelty of their predecessors, who had indeed almost exhausted this field of literature; and such seems to have been the contemporary sentiment.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, among the exhausted sciences, or those on which the public began to look with averted eyes, may be reckoned Metaphysics. The adverse theories propounded by Mr. Locke and Dr. Reid, in which the former held the chief sources of knowledge to be sensational, and the latter instinctive, seems to have led to quiescence, or the not improbable compromise that both, in different degrees, were right, and

that human intelligence is instinctive as well as experimental. At all events the philosophy of mind ceased to be a pervading inquiry, and attention was only drawn to it at intervals in the graceful but not very adventurous dissertations of Dugald Stewart. Mathematics, too, declined in interest, and passed over to the continent, to be carried to a higher pitch than the Newtonian age had left them by Clairault, D'Alembert, the Bernouillis, Lagrange, and Laplace.

Setting aside, then, the exhausted or neglected departments of intellect, we may next turn to the originalities, or more successfully cultivated branches of letters, that have compensated and replaced them. Happily, the set-off is both abundant, estimable, and diversified. Taking up the subject in the order of appearances, we shall commence with the less important, and say that the "Modern Novel," in which by sprightly narrative, plot, and dramatic impersonation, actual life is portrayed, forms a distinguished feature of the age, and of which Henry Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Smollett, and Goldsmith have contributed amusing and edifying examples, gauged in manner and spirit by the standard of their time. The admired Defoe, who was less of the novelist or dramatist of actual existence than an inimitable *raconteur* of it in imaginary scenes, belonged to an earlier period, and so did the principal works of Fielding and Richardson. But the reader may demur to Prose Fictions as only the light troops of literature, of which an age is usually most prolific in its early advances. Well, then, I shall bring up the infantry corps of letters in the historians of the time. In learned research, classic style, artistical arrangement, selection and masterly digest of materials, and in breadth and justness of commentary, Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson are unsurpassed, and no preceding names can compete with them. Vast libraries must have been explored by

each, and with patient toil and sagacity all that was valuable extracted, polished, and made fit to be compassed in a few volumes, in which it is a delight not less than a wide expansion of mind to survey the rise and vicissitudes of nations. The ground they covered was previously unoccupied, or occupied only with unsightly and unapproachable edifices, which can no more be compared to their tasteful and intelligent elaboration, than a feudal castle to the elegance and commodiousness of a modern mansion. Historians of the past, however, can only work with the materials of others ; they do not or ought not to invent them ; they are, in truth, all compilers, but differing greatly in the tact and ability with which they handle their subjects. I will, therefore, in conjunction with the great masters of history, mention another name which conferred a somewhat kindred benefit on society by elaborating beauty and order out of chaos. I allude to Sir William Blackstone's "Commentaries." The laws of a country, as Mr. Froude has rightly considered them, form an integral and not the least important subdivision of its history. Those of England are perhaps the most curious of any nation ; and to trace their evolution in respect of property, persons, classes, and institutions—the complicated relations, created and transmitted from a barbarous age, which fetter and entangle the one, and the ardent and persistent struggles which have matured and made free the other—constitute interesting and instructive themes. It was a seductive inquiry, and the knowledge it comprehended in different degrees needful to every one, but prior to Blackstone's work unattainable. The profession were partly, and the rest of the educated classes almost entirely, excluded from legal information, and could as little become acquainted with the laws as with Sanscrit or the ancient Chaldee, in the black letter,

big volumes, and barbarous Latin which enveloped them. But the tasteful and clear-headed judge, by digesting and arranging the lumber of his predecessors, by lucid and ingenious illustrations, and by the use of suitable language, made English jurisprudence intelligible to the student, and not wholly repellent to the unlearned, though the erudite commentator was no reformer of its transmitted barbarisms.

Another member of the solid phalanx of letters, not remotely connected with Laws and History, remains to be introduced. It is the author of the "Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations." Adam Smith's work was only slowly appreciated, as any revelation adverse to established usage may expect to be. Fox and Pitt, among practical statesmen, were the first to be impressed with the luminous principles of the "Inquiry," and lately they have become the ruling principle of national policy, the successful example of which is extending to the Continent and American states. If nations are to be united in perpetual amity it is most likely to be attained by a free interchange of material benefits, and the common conviction that the interests of states, like those of individuals, in their moral relations, are mutual and the same. This was no discovery of Dr. Smith; the great truth had been promulgated long before by Sir Dudley North, who taught that the "world, as to trade, is but as one nation or people, and therein nations are as persons."* Smith's great merits,

* *Discourses on Trade*, published in 1691. The same principle a little later was inculcated by Jacob Vanderlint, in a pamphlet published in 1734. (*Dugald Stewart's Biographical Memoirs of Smith, Robertson, and Reid*, p. 134.) It would seem, too, from M. Say's *Treatise on Political Economy* (vol. i. p. 73.) that Smith was not the first who taught the advantages of a division of labour; but that the same subject had been dwelt upon in a public course of lectures delivered at Milan in 1769. As to originality of discovery, see *post. p. 539.*

like those of Hume, Gibbon *, or Robertson, were less those of originality than of a masterly treatment and popular setting forth and elucidation of pre-existing materials. It is not mentioned to their disparagement but to their honour, that from the crude ore they brought out the translucent metal, and thereby facilitated immensely intellectual progress. In the existing driving current of life, with so many sciences and arts soliciting attention, what could the existing generation have done without the invaluable aids to knowledge they afforded ? How few would have followed the story of Rome through the interminable maze of the Byzantine historians, or that of England through the old chroniclers and ballad writers, or the clumsy digest of them by Carte, Speed, and Baker ? The same applies to the undigested mass with which Adam Smith and Blackstone had to deal. How great, then, ought our gratitude to be towards the illustrious men who pioneered our way ? Their works are the machinery of intellect, have abridged mental labour, and tended to expand and multiply knowledge and literature, just as the contemporary mechanical discoveries tended to augment and diffuse the material products of industry. The language of history and economical science has been enriched by them, their philosophy utilised, and made readily available to statesmen, legislators, and the community.

Whether Dr. Paley ought to be included in the same category of celebrities I hesitate to decide. He certainly was a lucid abridger, and made plain some of the received principles of political and ethical science ; but, like Sir William Blackstone, and probably from similar motives, he was chary in his allusions to improvements. Had he not been a churchman he might have proved a more adven-

* Mr. Carlyle has happily characterised Gibbon,—“ the splendid bridge from the old world to the new.” (*Emerson’s English Tracts.*)

turous teacher. His style is mostly clear and strong, his illustrations apt and striking, his judgment judicious ; but his theology fetters his mind, and perverts his applications. The result in his "Moral and Political Philosophy" is an unequal, crude, and unscientific performance, remarkable notwithstanding for shrewd practical sense, which he displays in availing himself of the writings of Rousseau and some others, divested of their egotism and extravagance.

All these eminent persons, however, may be said to have lived before the Flood ; some of their facts have been corrected by more careful or later discoveries*, and their principles adjusted by a protracted and momentous intervening experience. It is not improbable that our standard historians may have to share the fate of their predecessors, and if not from failure of merit, for want of space, be crowded into smaller niches in the temple of Fame. The "Commentaries" of Blackstone, from changes in the laws, and the greater changes impending, are fast hastening into the fossilised state of the antediluvian age. Dr. Smith opened a wide field in political economy, but new principles have been forced upon its consideration in relation to the self-government of colonies — the commercial cycle of alternate prosperity and depression — the apportionment of wages and profits — coadequation of population and subsistence — popular education — the progress of crime — compulsory and voluntary relief of indigence — and the free or voluntary support of religion : upon all which there is little to guide inquirers in the

* It was only disclosed by the publication of the Supplement to Clarendon's State Papers, in 1786, that Dr. Guaden, bishop of Worcester, was the author of "Icon Basilike." From the want of this evidence Mr. Hume ascribed "Icon" to Charles I. (*Macdiarmid's Lives of British Statesmen.*)

“Wealth of Nations.” The Modern Novel, too, continued under George III., has declined—Richardson from the calculating virtue and mawkish sentimentality of his characters; Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne from coarseness and caricature,—drawbacks for which their rich humour and wit have not been deemed adequate compensation in a decorous age nervously sensitive to refined expression. The unexceptionable favourites which continue universally admissible are Goldsmith’s “Vicar of Wakefield,” Johnson’s “Rasselas,” and Defoe’s “Robinson Crusoe;” all charming tales, but echoed perhaps beyond their just renown for any depth or breadth of life, character, or philosophy evolved in their composition. Diminutive bulk, as well as intrinsic excellence, may have contributed to maintain these productions in popular estimation; for it is a fact, which it is well for authors who aspire to immortality to bear in remembrance, that concentration of volume, as well as unchangeableness of fashion or principle, is an essential element of literary vitality.

The taste for Prose Fictions, however, has continued unabated, and with a different purpose and more dramatic execution has been abundantly met. The novels of William Godwin offer the most impressive feature, and fully reach one of the chief ends of fiction in keeping up excitement and en chaining interest. The professed aim of Godwin was higher; it was to bring out in strong relief the social miseries resulting from moral prejudices or mistaken education. He partly succeeded in his “Caleb Williams;” his Falkland is an impassioned and noble presentment of an elevated nature, trained, in deference to the world, to nice but erring sensibilities. His strength was in fiction; his “Political Justice” is an extravaganza; and his amiable contemporary, Mrs. Barbauld, was not far out in saying that it was “borrowed sense and

original nonsense." Nonsense was then at a high premium ; some of its least exceptionable traits were taken from a much wiser man — David Hume. After Godwin's revolutionary era appeared a cloud of fashionable novels, intended to delineate high life, but they expired from sameness and inanity. The most successful of prose writings were the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott, of which "Waverley" in 1814 was the masterly precursor.

A kindred theme is Poetry, in which King George's reign was resplendent, and of a noble vein, little debased by the envious spite, meanness, and satirical venom of the age of Pope and Swift. If poetry must live, it can only be in a genial and ethereal realm of love and song, Elysian delights, tropical scenes and joys, away from the cold and struggling realities of prosaic existence. Cowper's blank-verse translation (Hobbes' attempt seems to have been still more unfortunate) of the "tale of Troy divine" is no inapt exemplar of what poetry ought not to be, but ornate, glowing, soaring above all that is base in life or nature. It is this which detracts from the enjoyment of the graphic delineations of Crabbe: he gives us the literal and true when we seek to disport in Midsummer dreams, not in the grief and depravity of workhouse scenes, or those of a rotten borough. Doubtless a vivid presentment of the truth, especially of the passions, is the legitimate purpose of both poetry and prose ; but when writers are free to choose, as in fiction, assuredly they ought to incline to Eden rather than Hades ; to hope, bliss, and beauty, rather than to goblin stories of fate, judgment, sepulchres, and decay, in the gloomy fashion of Blair and the author of the "Night Thoughts":—

" Why clasp woe's hand so tightly ?
 Why sigh o'er blossoms dead ?
 Why cling to forms unsightly ?
 Why not seek joy instead ? "

Melancholy was the pervading hue of poetry in Cowper, and tinged, though in a less degree, with sadness that of Goldsmith and Johnson ; but the Hyperion inspiration mightily changed ere the aged monarch had been gathered to his fathers, when in felicitous style Hope told a flattering tale in Thomas Campbell ; bright reminiscences of Memory in Samuel Rogers ; and before the reign closed, the united genius of Walter Scott, Moore, and Byron lit up in fervid heat and flame all that fancy could conceive of mediæval life, oriental passions, and grandeur. It is a gladness to have lived and partaken of the first gushing streams from these sparkling fountains. But an earlier bard must not be omitted ; and it may be doubted whether the flashes and electric touches of Sapphic fire from the soul-moving Robert Burns would not be ill-exchanged for the best of the brilliant triad just named ; though it is impossible to imagine anything more tasteful and chivalrous than the "Lady of the Lake," more emotional than some fragments of Lord Byron, or of more exquisite polish than the graceful poems and chansons of Thomas Moore. The luxuriant fancy of the author of "Lalla Rookh" touches even the sublime in his "Sacred Melodies," especially the noble anthem beginning —

" The turf shall be my fragrant shrine,
My temple, Lord ! that Arch of thine;
My censer's breath the mountain airs,
And silent thoughts my only prayers."

In splendour of diction Darwin is unsurpassed ; and, despite of his broken imagery, is worthy of remembrance. The catastrophe of the "Universe" is a magnificent description, although not strictly correct in its philosophy, the astronomer having arrived at a more agreeable finality than the fancy of the poet has been able to reach.

“ Roll on, ye stars, exult in youthful prime,
 Mark with bright curves the trackless steps of time ;
 Near and more near your beaming cars approach,
 And lessening orbs on lessening orbs encroach.”

Botanic Garden, canto iv.

“ All that’s bright must fade,” and the waters of Heli-con have been long dried up: but good poetry will never die or become unfashionable. A fine sentiment or brilliant thought will always stand best in metre. Intolerant the age has certainly become of long poems, as of long sermons or long speeches. Therefore the majestic epic, in solemn chant, will charm no more, and the grim Bentham has had his wish. But a good hymn or psalm, sprightly song, elegant ode or epigram, or neatly-turned sonnet will always be welcome, and which is all the living generation has time or patience to endure. Hardly the scaffolding exists for the creation of any more architectural edifice. Faith has died out, and a keen sense of the ridiculous become uppermost. Daphne and Adonis, Jupiter and Thunder are laughed at; nor will the ogres and sylvan deities of Teutonic and Scandinavian mythology pass muster. It may be doubted even whether the poem of the divine John Milton, with its grotesque machinery and impersonations, would succeed better than it did at the outset, or than Southey’s “ Madoc,” or “ Curse of Kehama,” in the critical and scientific times we live in. A similar decadence or want of relish for jargon, the mock-sublime, or sentimental nonsense, has been attributed to the regular Drama; but, like verse-making, it will never become wholly extinct, but continue to be patronised in social comedies, opera, oratorios, burletta, and farce. That which is urgently required is a tasteful and judicious artist to divest the scenic entertainments of our forefathers of their lengthiness and Vandalism, and accommodate them to existing civil avocations and business habits, our religious

worship, and more polished manners. Of this desirable renaissance symptoms are already abroad, in the adaptations and amateur feats of living wits and good fellows.

It is impossible to conceive that poetry and dramas appropriate to the age should fail, while the kindred arts of Painting, Sculpture, Music, and Architecture luxuriantly thrive. The commencement of the English School of Painting, early in the reign of George III., forms an epoch in the rise of the Fine Arts ; and its first struggles elucidate a curious principle of progress. The highest models are always emulated, but they are sometimes more repressive than favourable to the evolution of genius. Examples in every walk of excellence may be of such a transcendent order as to discourage any hope of competing with them, and, consequently, aspirants may either in despair relinquish any attempt at rivalry, or, in lieu of trusting to original power in themselves, be content servilely to follow their predecessors. A humbling superiority of this kind seems to have long kept back the arts in this country. In these, as in other liberal studies, Italy had been the European teacher ; but her career had begun and ended before their culture was thought of in England. The neglect partly arose from our political and religious divisions, not at all from want of patronage; princes and nobles being ready enough to exchange their wealth for the productions of the pencil, but then it was those of the great masters, or of those who closely copied them. They were the sole standard by which merit was appreciated, and Vandyke, Lely, and Kneller, who had brought to Britain all the skill and finish of continental art, and reaped a rich harvest, left but little opening for native talent. It had to run a hopeless race, and enter the lists with Italian and Flemish masters, not in their infancy, but maturity of attainment.

With foreign aid the arts flourished under the Stuarts ; but subsequently they declined, both from the change of dynasty and the neglect of them here and on the continent from the universal rage of war in Europe ; so that on the accession of the Hanover family they had fallen to a low ebb. Portraits were almost the only subjects attempted, and these in a miserable style of inferiority and sameness. There was no variety of execution ; the same attitudes and draperies were indiscriminately given to all sitters. If a likeness was reached the artist attained his wish, and sought no more. The celebrated Joshua Reynolds, a native of Plympton, was the first to throw aside these trammels, and give to portraits a poetic and historic cast. Not content with a fac-simile of the features, he tried to seize the characteristic air and attitude or action of the sitter, and catch him at the graceful moment, ennobling the portrait in every way compatible with verisimilitude. Reynolds had trained himself in Italy, but with the independence of genius — to improve upon, not slavishly to follow, the great masters, by the exercise of his own judgment and elegant taste. But every deviation from established routine, for a time, is heresy. When David Garrick started his more natural style of acting, in place of the rant and caricature in vogue, Quin proclaimed him a dissenter, and said that he had introduced a “new religion.” A similar prejudice confronted Reynolds on his return from Rome. His old master, Thomas Hudson, was among the first to protest against him. After attentively eyeing one of his portraits, and seeing nothing of his own manner in it, he exclaimed, “Zounds ! Reynolds, you don’t paint so well as you did.” Another face-maker said it would “never do ; why,” says he, “you don’t paint in the least like

Godfrey Kneller: Shakspeare in poetry, and Kneller in painting — damme!"

Prejudice must always yield to nature to "advantage dressed." This was the rare merit of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He was the first of British artists who sought to elevate his art by the embellishments of taste and imagination. Guided by these enlarged views, he was soon enabled to stand among the elders, and boldly deviating from a servile copying either of subject or predecessors, to equal, if not outshine them. With abilities both dazzling and solid he soon enlisted the potent aid of fashion in his favour, which gained him the merited honour of perpetuating the facial lineaments of his most distinguished contemporaries. Before he had been ten years in practice he had set up his carriage, and enjoyed an income of 6000*l.* a year. His independence secured, he tried more perilous ventures in art on subjects of fancy and history. His first in this line was "Garrick between Comedy and Tragedy;" and next, in 1765, "A Lady Sacrificing to the Graces." In 1773 he exhibited his splendid painting of "Ugolino;" but critics differ on the merits of the principal figure, Allan Cunningham thinking that Count Ugolino has not enough of the nobleman in his look, while Horace Walpole held that paternal despair and impending death could not be more forcibly depicted, whether in beggar or patrician. Apart from portraits Sir Joshua executed upwards of 100 great pictures, nearly all of which have been made familiar by engravings. He contributed 244 pictures to the annual exhibition of artists, principally to the Royal Academy, which was incorporated in 1765, and of which Reynolds, now the head of British art, fitly became the first president. From this seat was delivered fifteen admirable Discourses, the first Jan. 2. 1769, and the last Dec. 10.

1790, and which Sir Thomas Lawrence has described as "the golden precepts, now acknowledged as canons of universal taste." Nothing could be better timed for the artist or the general public, and from the judicious inculcations of Sir Joshua may be traced the nation's successful progress in the Fine Arts.

If the passion be strong, and time allowed, genius mostly overcomes all difficulties. Of this the president's contemporary, Benjamin West, was an instance. Though by birth an American and a Quaker, he ranks among the distinguished founders of the Academy, and, favoured by the king, produced fine historical pieces. But the public taste was in the transition state, and his "Death of General Wolfe" was objected to because the subject had not been treated classically—the costume of the warriors was not dignified enough. The ambitious Barry was in the other extreme—was enthusiastic for the antique; and his "Venus rising from the Sea," and "Jupiter and Juno," were deemed by good judges exquisite productions; but popular preference extended only to the flowing toga, and no sympathy was felt for his emblazonry of the heathen deities. Gainsborough's genius was of native culture; he had sought inspiration at no continental shrine; but his scenic works, with those of Thomas Wilson, another early academician, form an epoch in landscape painting. Wilson's field was wider than that of Gainsborough, which was exclusively "English in its skies and atmosphere, and living subjects." Wilson had studied in Italy, and had caught the hue and character of its scenery, with all its emotional associations.

Painting must have continued a limited gratification had it been unaided by auxiliary arts. What printing has done for literature, engraving has done for the works of the easel. At the commencement of the present period

the French excelled us in line engraving ; but English artists rapidly improved, and the art began to be applied by Strange and Woollet, with unequalled skill, to history and landscape. The settlement of Vivares and Grignon, both Frenchmen, in England helped forward native talent. By these clever men, with Joseph Strutt the antiquary, and aided by the arts of mezzotint and aquatint engraving, transcripts of the works of Reynolds, West, and the continental masters were extensively multiplied and made accessible. Wood-engraving was revived, and the admirable cuts of Thomas Bewick contributed graphic and popular illustrations of books of natural history, which his brother extended to the poems of Goldsmith and Parnell. The invention of steel plates towards the close of the century afforded great additional power ; and the joint labours of the draughtsman, engraver, and bookseller being combined, led to a profuse issue of illustrated works. Voluminous editions of the classics and novels were published, followed by Boydell's Shakspeare, and Milton, and the rival Bible of Macklin. With these and others the names of Stothard, Heath, Sharpe, Lowry, Fittler, and Caroline Watson are associated.

The art of Sculpture was later in rising to eminence than painting and engraving. The earliest public monument is that of General Wolfe in Westminster Abbey, by Wilton ; but it evinces little taste, skill, or invention. In the latter part of the century Banks, Nollekins, Bacon, and Flaxman became celebrated. An early work of Banks is the noble statue of Achilles in the hall of the British Gallery, executed in heroic style. Nollekins was deficient in general education, and without poetic fancy, but attained eminence by a close study of nature, and innate feeling for antique beauty. The works of John Bacon are diffused in halls, cathedrals, and gal-

leries, from his modelling, in Coade's artificial stone. Like Banks he was self-indebted for his art, but inferior in classic taste and genius to his contemporary. His reputation spread with his monument of Chatham in Guildhall in 1780; and from being an obscure labourer for Coade he became in a few years "the companion of peers and princes." The mind of Flaxman was of classical cast, and inclined him to the conclusion that the works of art and literature ought to be chiefly consecrated to the ennobling of the great and good. His rare merits are displayed by his compositions from the Greek poets, and the superb monument raised to Lord Mansfield in Westminster Abbey.*

The works of Architecture appeal more strikingly to general sympathy than those of the pencil, the graver, or the chisel. To this, the most serviceable and grand of the Fine Arts, England has native claims, which elevate her above rivalry; and from her cathedrals, palaces, and feudal abodes may be traced the leading vicissitudes of her public history. In the culture of a national characteristic style, our preeminence dates from the commencement of the Norman dynasty. "Throughout the transitions of the middle ages," it has been observed, "we thought for ourselves, and thought well."† The later English Gothic is peculiar, and transcends in purity and beauty the contemporary styles of the Continent. Our distinctive superiority continued in the change which accompanied the revival of classical architecture by Inigo Jones, whose great examples were varied and extended by the inventive talents of Wren and Vanbrugh. With

* Pictorial History of England, vol. v. p. 628. for critical strictures, and vol. vii. p. 749. for illustrations.

† Pict. Hist. England, vol. vii. p. 731.

those distinguished names are associated noble specimens of the independent school of English architecture in Whitehall Banqueting-house, St. Paul's Cathedral, Blenheim House, and Castle Howard. The Earl of Burlington, who was a great patron of the arts in the reign of George II., thought Vanbrugh not strictly classical in his style, and sought to improve upon him by another extreme in transplanting into England Italian architecture. This was a plunge on the opposite side, for it is plain that there can be no universality in architecture any more than in costume, and that the fashion of building must vary with civilisation, climate, site, habits, and occupations. Utility ought to be combined with beauty — if they can ever be separate ; and this was not exemplified by his lordship's celebrated Chiswick House, in its sameness of form, intermingling of windows and chimneys, with its catacomb library room in the damp and darkness of a northern latitude edifice.

The greatest architectural structure under George III. was the fine quadrangle of Somerset House by Sir William Chambers, and the extension and improvement, by Taylor in 1785, of the Bank of England. At Bath superb examples of street architecture were exhibited in the Crescent, Queen Square, and the Parades. But the grand display of architecture in London and the country began after the Peace, and to the reign of George IV. further notice of it may be fitly deferred.

All the Fine Arts may be reckoned among the elegant luxuries of society, and usually keep pace with the advance of national refinement and affluence. Music, as an element of public entertainment among the moderns may be traced to the *Mysteries* and *Moralities* of the middle ages, when choruses, songs, and dances came to be introduced into the scriptural dramas. Such mixed

performances, with pageantry, favoured the *Masques* of which Ben Jonson, Milton, and Shirley were authors. In Italy the *Mystery**, or religious tragedy, gradually assumed the shape of the *oratorio*, or sacred musical drama; and the masque, or secular play, intermixed with music and spectacle, was converted into the regular opera. From Italy these entertainments were introduced into the principal courts and capitals of Europe. In England the Puritans, who were adverse to recreative indulgences, passed ordinances against music and stage-plays; but they speedily recovered from these austerities in the license of the Restoration. In 1678 Dryden published his play, called "The State of Innocence," which he denominated an opera, but improperly, the piece containing no lyrical poetry, and the music employed being entirely instrumental. It was never brought on the stage; its supernatural machinery of chaos, thunderbolts, and flying angels rendering representation impossible. He was more fortunate with his "King Arthur" and "Tyrannical Love," both of which were acted with the accompaniment of Purcell's music. The complete Italian opera had not yet reached England. The first opera performed entirely in that language was "Almahide," and appeared in January, 1710.† Towards the end of the year Handel arrived in London, on the invitation of several noblemen who had become acquainted with him at the electoral court of Hanover. He was in his twenty-seventh year, and had already acquired, as composer, a high reputation in Germany and Italy. He began at the Haymarket Theatre with "Rinaldo;" and the romantic interest of the subject, the charm of the music, and the

* An Italian mystery, the "Adamo" of Adreini, suggested to Milton the subject of "Paradise Lost." (*Hogarth's Memoirs of the Opera*, p. 85. note.)

† *Hogarth's Memoirs of the Opera*, vol. i. p. 200.

splendour of the spectacle, drew a succession of crowded audiences to the end of the season of 1711, despite the hostile criticism of Addison in his "Spectator." From this time Italian operas were regularly performed by complete Italian companies; and such were their attraction that our national musical drama was for a time almost entirely abandoned. But the neglect was short-lived: either from the dearth of good Italian performers, or from the loss, by Handel, of his noble patrons, who started an opposition to him, the Italian stage suddenly declined, and the native lyrical drama completely recovered favour by the appearance, in 1727, of Gay's "Beggars' Opera." This famous piece chiefly took by its songs, the words of which Gay adapted to popular ballad airs, amongst them some of the finest Scotch melodies. The words, however, are not all by Gay. The "Modes of the Court" was written by Lord Chesterfield; "Virgins are like the Flower in its Lustre," by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams; "When you censure the Age," by Swift; "Gamesters and Lawyers are Jugglers," is ascribed to Mr. Fortescue, Master of the Rolls.* The wit and cleverness of this piece are unquestionable, but its tendency, as every spectator must have experienced, is to keep in heart and countenance the evil passions of mankind; consequently Dr. Johnson was right in his conclusion, that in the "Beggars' Opera" there is "such a *labe-factation* of all principle as to be injurious to all morality."

The quarrels of Handel with patrons and performers, which were rather frequent, from his rough, imperious nature, never occasioned the loss of his services to English music. While conductor of the choir established by the Duke of Chandos in his splendid chapel at Cannons, he

* Memoirs of the Opera, vol. ii. p. 11.

produced the fine anthems which are sufficient to immortalise him. In 1741 he brought out his masterpiece, the "Messiah ;" and which, though not at first fully appreciated, is considered unsurpassed in sublimity of composition. The oratorios which Handel continued to give in Covent Garden Theatre till his death in 1759, met the approbation of overflowing audiences, and the fame of his "Messiah" continued yearly to increase. A national tribute to the memory of the great composer was given in 1785 by a musical commemoration at Westminster Abbey, in which pieces selected exclusively from his works were performed by a band of 500 instruments, in presence of the king and royal family, the principal nobility, church dignitaries, and foreign ministers. The nett proceeds of the festival amounted to 7000*l.*, and the fame of it extended beyond the metropolis, diffusing in the provinces a taste for sacred music of the highest class, which was evinced by the music meetings that almost immediately after ensued in many of the large towns, and by the formation of choral societies. The commemoration also drew the attention of foreign artists, many of whom came over and settled in England. It is to them we owe the introduction of the pianoforte in place of the harpsichord ; and which, by the successive improvements of Clementi, Cramer, and Broadwood, has become the most general if not the highest invention of instrumental music. Before this, music had received a considerable impulse from new compositions of the organists of our cathedrals and professors at the universities, and metropolitan societies formed for its cultivation. In 1761 the Catch Club was formed : it consisted of noblemen and gentlemen, who met weekly to dine and enjoy vocal harmony at the Thatched House Tavern. Upon a similar plan the Glee Club was formed in 1787; but its meetings were limited to twelve in the season, and no

prizes were offered. A more influential association than either of these was the institution in 1776 of the Concert of Ancient Music, the leading object of which was the preservation, against the rage of novelty, of the standard productions of the old masters. Among the names most worthy to be remembered in these advances were those of Messrs. Kent, Nares, and Hayes, each the composer of stock anthems; and the Lords Mornington, Sandwich, and Burlington. Dr. Burney and Sir John Hawkins were the authors of elaborate histories of music; and Mason, the poet, of a "Critical Essay on Church Music." A foundation was thus laid for future progress and for future notice probably in another reign.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GEORGE III.—NATIONAL INDUSTRY AND THE USEFUL ARTS.

Internal State of the Country at the Peace of 1763.—Want of Mechanical Power, the great Desideratum.—Need of Coal for obtaining Mineral Products.—Steam Engine of James Watt.—Discovery of the Spinning Jenny, Spinning Frame, and Self-acting Mule.—Originality of Inventions; futile Controversies on.—Earthenware; Wedgwood's Improvement in Pottery; Revival of Etruscan Art.—Agricultural Advances; Improvements in Live Stock; Increase of Cereal Produce; Relative Condition of Tenant Farmers.—Influence of the Revolutionary War on National Industry.—Enclosure of Waste Lands.—Corn Trade.—Progress of Canal-navigation.—Ports and Harbours of the Kingdom; Rise of the Dock System.—Growth in Opulence and Intellectual Culture of the Provincial Towns.

THE peace of 1763 left Britain a widely-extended empire, upon the platform of which to erect the fabric of its industrial greatness. Dazzling as foreign acquisitions may be, they are not so sure a basis of national happiness as

the command of domestic resources; but of the culture of these the legislature was wisely not unmindful. During the first fourteen sessions of King George's reign, 702 acts were passed for the dividing of commons, enclosing of wastes, and draining of marshes; effecting an increase of productive territory more valuable than the cession of colonies, or of the soubahs or circars of the dissolving Mogul empire. The improvement of the roads also obtained attention. Efforts had been made in the preceding reign to mend the highways of Britain, which were not equal to those of the Continent; and the same laudable policy was pursued in the present. The improvement of water-carriage opened another mode of facilitating internal traffic. It began at the Revolution, —suggested probably by the advantages Holland had derived from aqueous structures,—and from that time to the death of George II. many rivers had been made navigable by widening or deepening their channels. The practice continued under George III., with the addition of canals,—a more certain navigation than the natural streams, being less liable to be obstructed by the droughts of summer or the floods of winter. During the same period of fourteen sessions, nineteen statutes were passed for making artificial navigations, including the Bridgewater, the Trent, and the Forth canals; stupendous works for the time, which, by connecting the eastern and western seas, and the manufacturing towns with the capital and outports, were of immense utility in the diffusion of equal benefits through the kingdom.

These improvements were of more essential service to agriculture than to commerce or manufacture. But in the advancement of the latter, equal zeal was evinced, though not so successfully or wisely exerted. In this direction the legislature proceeded on the prevalent maxims of the age,

inclining to what has been termed the Mercantile System, and seeking to foster home products by bounties, and to interdict foreign rivalry—the chief stimulus of domestic improvement—by prohibitions.* More obstructive, however, than a mistaken policy was a deficiency that about this time had begun to be seriously felt, and which, had it not been supplied, industrial development in this kingdom seemed likely to have reached its climax in face of external competition.

The deficiency to which I allude was the want of POWER. England abounded in mineral treasures; but they were either unavailable, or only so at an increasing cost of production. In the early part of the century water power was the chief agent in driving machinery, the motion obtained from wind being too weak or uncertain for most purposes. Hydraulic machinery had been greatly improved by Smeaton and others; but they could not surmount the difficulties occasioned by droughts and floods, nor obviate the necessity, however otherwise inconvenient, of erecting mills and opening mines near falling water. Horse machinery was sometimes employed to avoid a total stoppage in dry seasons; and sometimes the steam-engines of Savery and Newcomen. But these contrivances were all becoming inadequate, especially in the mining operations of Cornwall and in many collieries. Comparatively shallow as mines then were, the working of them was greatly impeded by the accumulation of water; and the expense of carrying it off by the labour of men and horses, assisted by inclined planes, and the other clumsy apparatus in use, was enormous. Many coal mines were in consequence abandoned, though the working of some of them was resumed when aided by more economical and efficient auxiliaries.

* History of the Productive Classes, p. 40. Chambers.

A command of Coal, beside its domestic uses was closely connected with that of iron. At one period, fuel and iron were in direct antagonism. The destruction of woods and forests to obtain charcoal for the smelting of iron created an alarm for the scarcity of fuel; and in the reign of Elizabeth acts were passed to restrict the felling of timber for the making of iron, and to prohibit the establishment of new iron-works within twenty-two miles of London;—the counties of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex being then the chief sites of smiths and furnaces.* The progress of population and agriculture tended further to forestal destruction; while a fresh consumer of timber had arisen in the growing importance of shipbuilding. A more abundant supply of coal had thus become a pressing exigency, both for fuel and as a substitute for timber. For the saving of timber in smelting, various plans were put forth; the earliest and most promising by Lord Dudley: but either from popular prejudice against the use of pit-coal, or the want of a new power to give the requisite force and regularity of blast in furnaces, coke did not obtain entire precedence over charcoal till a new agency had been quickened into life.

From the want of an efficient application of this slumbering instrumentality not only were iron-masters, shipbuilders, and fuel-consumers—that is, the entire community—at a disadvantage, but also textile manufacturers had begun to share in their difficulties. These wanted a new spinning contrivance: they had weft enough, but were at a stand for yarn; and without both, of course the weaver could not turn out his web. Necessity is the mother of invention; and this was never more strikingly exemplified than in the series of remarkable discoveries I shall briefly

* Pict. Hist. England, vol. ii. p. 811.

indicate. All the preceding exigencies dwelt upon were met, and England speedily enabled to outdo all rivalry in its productive arts. Coal, copper, and tin mines were drained, forest timber saved, blast furnaces made high and forcible to produce the desired contact between coke and iron ore, and bobbin made to spin multitudinous threads rivalling gossamer in texture.

James Watt, if not the inventor, was certainly the nursing parent that exorcised the marvellous motive force to impel machinery. He had worthy forerunners *; but to him unequalled honour is due for originality, patient perseverance, and fertility of resource, to overcome the throng of discouragements which mostly environ new promulgations. He was a native of Greenock, and in 1764 began the improvements in the application of steam which were to make his name immortal, and the application of which mighty revolutionary agent still continues in progress of novel development. Three years later James Hargreaves, an ingenious carpenter or weaver — for writers differ about his trade — of Blackburn, invented the Spinning-jenny, the first of several improvements in the cotton manufacture. By this machine eight threads might be spun with the same facility as one, and subsequently it was brought to such perfection that a child was able to work no fewer than from 80 to 120 spindles.† It did not however make any change in the principle of spinning, the thread produced by it being like that of the common wheel, fit for weft only; neither did it initiate the factory system in place of domestic employment, the jenny being introduced into the houses of many Lancashire weavers. It was applicable only to the spinning of cotton for weft, being unable to give to

* *Antè*, p. 161.

† McCulloch's Commercial Dictionary, p. 452.

the yarn the fineness and strength requisite in the longitudinal threads or warp; but this deficiency was soon supplied in the Spinning-frame, which spins a vast number of threads of any degree of tenuity and firmness. The invention of this extraordinary machine has been usually ascribed to Richard Arkwright, a native of Preston, and by trade a barber. Living in a manufacturing district, his attention was drawn to the operations carrying on around him, and hearing from every one complaints of the deficient supply of cotton yarn, assisted by John Kay, an ingenious watchmaker, he started a new mode of spinning. But he seems to have revived only a dormant invention; for Mr. Baines, in his "History of the Cotton Manufacture," has shown that the merit of original discovery belongs to John Wyatt, who thirty years before had attempted to spin by rollers. From some cause Wyatt was unable to mature his invention, so that the merit of rendering it available belongs to Arkwright.

I will here remark, that upon the originality of inventions and discoveries there is often much futile research and controversy. Absolute originality in man is impossible. We may learn from observation the laws of Nature, but cannot add to her works. We cannot create; from nothing, nothing can arise. Most truly the Hebrew sage has announced "There is nothing new under the sun;" nor can there be, only new fashions or revivals. A pre-existing cognate thought or normal type must always have been there; without it there would have been no base or material for invention to work upon; nothing from which the mind by association or induction, the only sources of invention, could have wrought out a new combination for human uses. Higher than this invention cannot ascend. The greatest inventors, and thinkers too, are only manufacturers; all have had a starting point or

germ to begin with, unless we allow, what is clearly impossible, that they began with nothing—that is, there was an egg without a bird. It is in search of this, however, that writers often vainly occupy themselves ; they seek a beginning for that which cannot have a perceptible beginning, save in the One Inscrutable. Who found out the mariner's compass? Nobody that is known. Who the art of making bread, wine, paper, glass, or gunpowder? They have no inventors in their primary elements ; they have been an accumulation of experience in combination, still in progress of development. Who invented printing, sculpture, house-building, or ship-building? They are coeval with man's social existence. More than all, who found out the force of steam? It must have been coeval with the first observance of boiling water—a point varying at different altitudes, on the plain or mountain ; and probably the Guebres or Fire-worshippers made the first discovery.

An Invention is generally the child of many parents, and the honours are divided. The first lucky thought belongs to one; the practical application to another of perhaps more patient or comprehensive intelligence ; and the successful bringing to maturity and publicity may be the work of a third party, who lends the aid of his capital. This is to some extent exemplified by the progress of the spinning-frame. Wyatt had caught the idea of rollers, and from some cause left it to Arkwright and the watchmaker to carry it out, so that it was a joint product. Sir Richard Arkwright—for he was worthily knighted for this and other services in carding and weaving by machinery—had a long and fierce war to wage in the courts of law, in common with Mr. Watt, against pirating interlopers, both in defence of their claims of originality and the profit of their discoveries. The inventions of

Sir Richard Arkwright were speedily followed by others, one of the most important of which was the contrivance of the Mule-jenny, so called from its being a compound of the spinning-jenny and the spinning-frame. It was invented by Mr. Crompton, of Bolton, but did not come into general use till after the dissolution of Arkwright's patent in 1785. The mule enabled the spinner to make a prodigious advance in the fineness as well as the rapidity of his work ; and is considered by Dr. Ure as the "parent of the muslin manufacture, destined in a short time to render Europe the successful competitor of the previously unrivalled productions of Hindostan." At a later period, the Power-loom was discovered by Mr. Cartwright, a clergyman of Kent, and effected that economy of labour in weaving which the jennies had effected in spinning.

These great improvements led to minor ones ; for it is the nature of a signal invention to awaken curiosity, and attract a concurring intelligence to aid and perfect its development. These, however, must be passed over ; the great object being only to mark the revolution that occurred just before and during the American war, from mechanical contrivances, and the substitution of Watt's improved steam-engine as an impelling force in place of the old water-wheel, dependent on special localities, and the seasons' variations. A better command of coal was doubtless the foundation of the movement ; it raised the steam, smelted the iron, and improved its quality ; so that cast-iron began to take the place of brass and wrought iron, and be more diversely employed in the construction of machinery, boilers, and even bridges, the iron one of Colebrooke Dale being the first, and erected in 1776. The stir made, and onward impulse given by coal, iron, steam, and other mechanical powers, in the provincial emporia of Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool,

and Leeds, are now great facts fully accomplished, and too familiar to be dwelt upon.

But there is one art eminently beautiful and useful, and wholly distinct in locality and character, which must not be passed over. It is among the most ancient, and, like some others which have been noted, its paternity is untraceable, and, for aught that appears, the garden of Eden may have been its birthplace. I refer to Pottery, which had long been almost stationary in Staffordshire, and below that of foreigners in form, glazing, and raw material. In all these respects the tasteful and inventive Josiah Wedgwood effected marked improvements; his first, the production, in 1763, of a new kind of cream-coloured ware, covered with a brilliant glazing, and surpassing the manufactures of France and Holland in texture and durability. It was called from its patron the "Queen's-ware;" but its superior quality and cheapness brought it into general use, and travellers on the Continent soon began to meet with it from Paris to Petersburg.* The ingenuity of Wedgwood extended from useful to ornamental works, and by combining different kinds of clay and introducing new colouring substances, he elaborated cameos, statuettes, and medallions of great elegance and strength. The collection of antique vases brought from Italy by Sir W. Hamilton opened a new field for his imitative powers, and he restored the lost art practised by the Etruscans, of painting on earthenware and porcelain without the glossy appearance of ordinary painting. About the same time the art of transferring printed devices to pottery was introduced by Mr. Carver, an engraver of Liverpool, and imparted great beauty, interest, and finish to table services.

By what has been briefly set forth on the progress of

* *Pict. Hist. England*, vol. v. p. 591.

the Useful Arts, it is manifest a wide foundation had been laid for the employment of the people, the exercise of their artistical skill, and for domestic comforts and enjoyments. The embellishments and home conveniences of life had been increased in number, fitness, and ornament; the extension of textile manufactures had diversified and improved the national costume ; canals and river navigation, aided by turnpikes and better roads, with Palmer's postal reform, vastly facilitated internal traffic and intercourse. The Society of Arts, seasonably formed in 1783, zealously forwarded the general movement, and by commencing to publish its Transactions, diffused a knowledge of new inventions, and which about this time were made in calico printing, in bleaching, the paper manufacture, in time-pieces, and in the improvement of the circulating medium of the realm. The first coining mill impelled by steam was erected in 1793 at Soho ; and the superior stamping and precision with which the genuine coins were struck by Boulton, aided by the new power, almost perfected this branch of art, while it greatly abridged the craft of the counterfeiter.

Agriculture has been previously dwelt upon (p. 271.), and it will suffice to bring up the prominent intervening advances. The qualities of husbandry varied, as it continues to do, in different counties of the kingdom. In Norfolk and Suffolk a great improvement had been made in light and unproductive soils by the introduction of turnips as a field crop. In other parts of the country turnips had become a general crop about 1769. Clover had been cultivated a century before, but, in common with sainfoin and other artificial grasses, was not general among farmers north of London. There was great waste in labour. The Rotherham, Norfolk, and single-wheeled ploughs had been contrived ; but, except among the more

intelligent, farmers stuck to the heavy two-wheeler, which required four horses instead of two, with ploughman and driver.

The greatest advance in rural industry was in the improvements begun by Mr. Bakewell in Stock-breeding. The points aimed at were smallness of bone, and aptitude to fatten in the shortest time and with the least consumption of food. Prior to Bakewell's efforts a fat ox or cow was rare; they were more like horses, and their flesh as coarse-grained. They could hardly be fattened anyhow for the butcher, as nearly all the food they ate went for offal. As to sheep, while the old sorts required three years to fatten, the improved breeds raised chiefly by crossing were ready for market in two years. Apart from the vast numerical increase, the weight of cattle has been more than doubled. In 1750 the average weight of cattle sold in Smithfield market was 370 lbs., of sheep 28 lbs.; now the average weight of beeves is about 800 lbs., and of sheep 80 lbs.

Somewhat akin to improvement in live stock was the improvement in the productiveness of the soil from better drainage, seed, and manure. This is a curious fact in agricultural history. Harrison mentions* it as an uncommon fact, that the produce of wheat under the Tudors had, from the greater thrift and skill of farmers, increased to 20 bushels per acre. This he considered to be double the produce of past times. But Arthur Young, about 1770, estimates the average produce of wheat per acre at three quarters; a gain of one fifth on the produce under Queen Elizabeth. On an average of years to the period I am writing, the average yield of wheat per acre in England has been estimated at $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 quarters. The year 1854 was one of uncommon abundance, and one

* *Antè*, p. 278.

estimate of that year has made it amount to from 6 to 7 quarters per acre. At the commencement of the reign of George III. the produce of wheat in England was under 4,000,000 of quarters*; it is now 13,000,000. The year 1763 closed a cycle of about half a century in which the harvests had been unusually productive, and only five had been decidedly unfavourable during that long term. The average price of wheat for the 50 years was only 34s. 11d. the quarter; and in 1761 the average price for the year was only 26s. 10d. In the twenty-seven years from 1828 to 1854, inclusive, the average price of wheat has been 63s. 7½d.

The Agricultural Board incorporated in 1793 was not useless for its purposes. It had an intelligent secretary in Arthur Young, who instituted surveys and inquiries, by which the best practices were ascertained, and a knowledge of them disseminated. The annual fêtes of Holkham and Woburn were serviceable in stimulating the national taste in favour of agriculture. It had the benefit of royal patronage, George III. being much attached to farming, and on his large farms at Windsor entered ardently into the disputed question, whether the working of oxen or horses is preferable in tillage husbandry.

From the close of Queen Anne's wars to the outbreak of the American war, was, with brief intermissions, a joyous period for all classes connected with rural industry. Land, it is probable, towards the end of this prosperous term, attained a higher value, measured by other interests, than it ever before or since has reached. According to Arthur Young, estates were sold about 1770 at thirty-two years' purchase. The tenant farmers appear to have been in almost as enviable a condition of comfort and independence as the owners of the soil; for it seems no ad-

* *Pict. Hist. England*, vol. v. p. 572.

vantage was sought to be taken of the thriving state of their occupation, by the landlords demanding a larger share of the produce ; that rents were not increased, and renewals of leases followed, as a matter of course, on the pre-existing terms. "A neighbour of mine in Suffolk," says Mr. Young, " who inherited a considerable landed property, informed me, that in various conversations which he had, between thirty and forty years ago (between 1770 and 1780), with a relation far advanced in years, and from whom much of that property was derived, that much surprise was expressed at the rise of rents which then began to take place. Through the long period of his relation's experience, no rise was ever thought of ; and lease after lease, in long succession, was signed, without a word passing on the question of rent : that was an object considered as fixed, and grandfather, father, and son succeeded without a thought of any rise."* Servants shared in the affluence of their employers, the wages of husbandry labour being 6s. in winter and 7s. in summer.

At the conclusion of peace with the American colonies and the continental states, our mechanical discoveries had come into play, and begun to tell on the chief national industries. They speedily retrieved the country from the disastrous accompaniments of the late struggle, by the accelerated impulse they gave to mining, manufactures, and commerce. All the productive sources of wealth profited by the new agencies ; and during the ensuing nine years of peace, the kingdom attained an unprecedented pitch of prosperity. Its career of felicity seemed unlimited, and on the opening of parliament in 1792, both the king and Mr. Pitt indulged in gratifying antici-

* Inquiry ; published in 1812.

pations of future national happiness. These prospects were not immediately darkened by the war of 1793. As no market of importance was closed against England by the breaking out of hostilities, British industry continued steadily to advance. After Holland was overrun by the French, and forced into the war against this country, the shipping interest was benefited by obtaining a part of the Dutch carrying trade, but only to a limited extent, as the largest part of this navigation was transferred to neutrals — Americans, Danes, Swedes, and Prussians. It was mainly a continental, not a naval or mercantile war ; consequently the progress of commercial and manufacturing pursuits continued almost unabated till the peace of Amiens.

In the second period of the war, from 1803 to the victory of Waterloo, commerce experienced greater vicissitudes. Pending the domination of Napoleon, our trade with the continent was in danger of being abridged or entirely destroyed. Although the Berlin and Milan decrees of Bonaparte were partly eluded, they were great obstacles to commercial intercourse ; and, after the seizure of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, Russia and Denmark joined the league against this country. The retaliatory Orders in Council on our part, and the Non-intercourse Act and embargoes on the part of the Americans, destroyed all traffic with the United States. While, however, the markets of Europe became narrowed for British commodities, a new field of adventure opened in South America by the emancipation of the Spanish colonies. This gave an impulse to domestic industry ; but the shipments to South America were much beyond the amount of capital the adventurers could fairly command, and still more beyond what the consumption of the places for which the investments were destined could absorb,

upon the condition of making adequate returns. In consequence of these speculative errors, there was loss in lieu of a gain on the first opening of the markets of the New World to British enterprise.

Notwithstanding these reverses, the commerce of the kingdom increased in the second, as in the first period of the French war. This prosperity was commonly ascribed to certain monopolies in commerce and navigation the country enjoyed in virtue of her naval superiority. These were unquestionable advantages. Without the command of the seas, our colonies would have been liable to be captured, our trade interrupted and partly destroyed. The ascendancy of our navy kept open to us the common highway of nations; it prevented detriment from the war; but it did not open new outlets for British products, further than by an extension from the acquisition of the colonies of the enemy. In balancing losses and gains from hostilities, the former undoubtedly outweighed. The conquest of sugar islands and the enlargement of the colonial market were not equivalents for the interdiction of trade with Spain, Holland, Germany, Belgium, and Italy. Because trade increased during the war, its prosperity has been mistakenly ascribed to it; whereas, had general peace continued,—had the nations of Europe not been impoverished, and their intercourse obstructed by hostilities, it is highly probable that all of them—England especially—would have advanced much more rapidly than they did in riches, industry, and trade. So far as Britain is concerned, this conclusion is incontestable; for though British commerce increased greatly during the war, it increased still faster during peace—a truth established by a comparative return of exports. It is a subject I have before dwelt upon *, but it is so im-

* History and Political Philosophy of the Productive Classes.

portant in an appreciation of the relative advantages of peace and war—if a state of war has any advantages—that it can hardly be too often repeated or extensively diffused.

The average exports of Britain for nine years, from 1793 to 1802, were 30,760,000*l.*

The average exports of ten years of the second war from 1803 to 1812, both inclusive, were 42,145,000*l.*

But the average exports of the seven years of peace, from 1814 to 1820, were 53,922,000*l.*; showing the proportionately more rapid extension of commerce during the latter than the two former periods. The first years of peace, too, it ought to be observed, were years of difficulty, arising from the sudden cessation of an immense war expenditure, unfavourable harvests, prevalence of political discontent, unsettled state of the currency, and revulsion in prices. But the tranquil period of the reigns of George IV. and William IV. more fully establish the superior commercial advantages of a state of peace over that of war. From 1820 to 1830, the total exports of the United Kingdom increased from 48,948,880*l.* to 69,700,748*l.* In 1836, which, however, was a speculative year, our total exports had risen to the enormous amount of 97,611,856*l.** During these periods there was a corresponding increase in the amount of imports: and it is by the aggregate amount of exports and imports that commercial prosperity and industrial activity ought to be measured.

Agriculture would have flourished contemporaneously with commerce, both during war and peace, had not its natural tendency been partly counteracted. The first effect of the war was to lessen the supply of labour and

* Parl. Paper, No. 38., Sess. 1847.

capital, and compel the abandonment of many projects of improvement, such as drainages, canals, roads, and other undertakings, dependent for success on a low rate of wages and of interest. The like drawbacks doubtless affected manufacturing industry; but in this direction their action was more than compensated by the expanding application of steam power and mechanical inventions. Another cause operated disadvantageously on farming. In the ten years from 1793 to 1802 inclusive, there were only three good harvests; the rest were unfavourable. During the last two years of the war, the scarcity was so intense, occasioned by the deficient harvests of 1799 and 1800, that the quartan loaf of 4lb. 5½oz. rose to 1s. 10½d. in March 1801. As any rise in price from bad harvests does not compensate for deficient crops, it is obvious that the seasons were against agricultural improvements.

The seasons in the second period of the war were more favourable, and agriculture advanced in spite of occasional depressions. But its prosperity during this term was more factitious, arising from the continuance of the Bank Restriction Act, and inordinate issues of paper money. Pending this deluge of imaginary wealth, an unnatural stimulus was given to every industrial pursuit. The representative of value of all kinds became a mere token; and rents, profits, wages, and prices, purely conventional. This reckless and artificial system laid the foundation of a host of difficulties, with which both the government and individuals had to contend in the subsequent years of peace. It shows the extreme state into which agriculture had been forced by the depreciation, or, more truly, the destruction of the currency, when, by the corn-law of 1815, eighty shillings per quarter was fixed as the lowest remunerative price at which wheat could be grown in England. The agricultural distresses that

followed chiefly originated in this source — in the laudable efforts of the Legislature to restore the currency to a sounder state. Rents, wages, profits, tithes, had to be adjusted to a new standard of value ; and every one, save annuitants, mortgagees, and others having fixed and unredicible claims, had to submit to apparently diminished revenues. Hence the wailing and interminable controversy that ensued in parliament, at town and county meetings, during the reigns of George IV. and William IV., on the occurrence of any interruption to the progress of the nation, whether the transitory difficulties of the community arose from an unfavourable harvest, or a mercantile reaction induced by an inordinate thirst of gain in speculative capitalists.

At an early period of the war, the backwardness of agriculture and high price of grain had fixed attention on the waste lands of the kingdom. In 1797, a parliamentary committee was appointed, from whose report it appeared that the first enclosure act, according to the modern system, was passed in 1710.* Only one other act passed in Queen Anne's reign. The number of acts passed, and acres of land enclosed, up to 1797, was stated as follows : —

Reign.	Acts.	Acres.
Anne	2	1,439
George I.	16	17,660
George II.	226	318,778
George III.	1532	2,804,197

Notwithstanding the enclosure of waste lands, and the stimulus given to husbandry by war prices, and the extension of tillage in consequence of the vast increase of capital since the peace, it seems clear that the progress of agriculture had, up to a recent period, been slow since

* Annual Register, vol. xxix. p. 411.

1793 in England, and by no means commensurate with the progress of commercial and manufacturing industry. While the export of the products of the latter had not only increased to an enormous amount, but at the same time supplied, at greatly reduced prices, the wants of a vastly increased population, those of the former had been growing inadequate to the supply of the home consumption alone. In short, it appears that agriculture, measured by the wants of the people, had declined ; and that, on an average of years, we had become more dependent on foreigners for an essential article of subsistence in 1841, than we were in 1790. This untoward result will be manifest from some valuable facts collected by the Earl of Radnor from parliamentary papers.

From his lordship's inquiries, it appears that, since 1790, there have been only two years, namely, 1792 and 1808, in which the imports of wheat have not exceeded the exports. The excess of the imports of wheat above exports has been, in the four decennial periods ending

		Yearly Average.'
In 1800,	4,266,963 quarters.	426,696 quarters.
1810,	5,996,352 "	599,635 "
1820,	5,481,994 "	548,199 "
1830,	9,413,459 "	941,345 "
1840,	14,953,419 "	1,495,341 "

The revulsion from an exporting to an importing country, marks an important transition in the history of agriculture during a period of nearly 150 years. In the 76 years between 1697 and 1773, the amount of our export of corn of all kinds above the import, was 30,968,000 quarters. During the forty-two years from 1773 to 1815, the amount of our import above our export was 24,630,000 quarters.*

* Lowe's Present State of England, App. p. 57.

The progress of agriculture and commerce created the want, and afforded the means of supplying it, of great internal improvements. About the time of the general establishment of turnpike roads, canals began to obtain attention, as the substitute for river navigation. The first canal, parallel to and in place of a river, was the Sankey, begun in 1753, from the Mersey to St. Helen's. The able designs of Mr. Brindley soon after began to be patronised by the Duke of Bridgewater: first, for reducing the cost of transporting the produce of the duke's coalfields to Manchester; and next, the charge of conveying merchandise to Liverpool by Runcorn. The success of these schemes gave rise to new speculations, by other parties, for connecting by canals the great rivers, as the Trent and Mersey, and the Mersey with the Humber, Severn, and Wye. By these artificial structures the great ports on the east and west sides of the island were brought into communication with the busy internal hives of manufacturing industry.

These advances naturally led to further improvements, for internal traffic and communication could not increase without some corresponding enlargement of accommodation in the ports and harbours of the kingdom. This was particularly the case with the Port of London. Since the termination of the American war, and extension of the foreign and colonial trade, the commerce of the river Thames had greatly increased. About 13,000 vessels arrived annually in the river: their cargoes had to be landed at what were termed the *legal* quays, extending from London Bridge to the Tower; or, if these were insufficient, at the sufferance wharfs on the opposite side of the Thames. It was only the smaller craft that could approach the quays; all the larger vessels were obliged to deliver their cargoes by means of lighters, as

colliers continue to do. The delay in consequence was often very great, and in particular seasons of the year, when the Pool was crowded with shipping, the confusion was indescribable. The revenue suffered, and individuals sustained immense losses from depredation and the exposure of their property on the wharfs, sugars and other valuable commodities often remaining for months unprotected upon the quays, six or eight hogsheads high. In 1796 a parliamentary committee sought to devise remedies for these disorders ; but it was only in 1799 the dock system was entered upon in earnest, by the erection of the West India Docks. A year or two after, the London and East India Docks were erected, and these were followed by the East County and St. Katherine's Docks, which, with adjacent warehouses, became more adequate to the existing wants—the coal trade excepted—of the commerce of London.

Before the erection of these capacious receptacles, similar necessities and deficiencies, arising from the flux and reflux of the tide, and the sloping beds of their natural harbours, had originated costly and extensive works in Bristol, Liverpool, and Hull. Less favoured than the metropolis, which, in addition to its noble river, had always been the seat of power and the centre of the richest districts of the kingdom, the great outports had almost entirely owed their progress to the fact of their sital position, in being the entrepôts of the inland and external trade of the kingdom. Some of them, through commerce, made a greater relative progress than had London even. Liverpool, for instance, has almost been created within a century : from an insignificant fishing-village, it has become a metropolis itself in opulence, intelligence, and influence ; and for this preeminence it has been mainly indebted to its situation as the focus of in-

terchange between Ireland, America, and the West Indies, and the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. The chief inland towns, as Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford, and Huddersfield, have flourished almost as rapidly, and in some respects in a greater degree than the ports, by mere force of industry and excellence in the handicraft arts and mechanical inventions.

Although, with one or two exceptions, the leading provincial towns are considered by their native historians as nearly coeval with London in antiquity, yet the chief revolutionary epochs conducive to their advancement have been comprised within the last three centuries. The first of these epochs doubtless consisted either in a better local site for industry, or in the fact of being open and exempt from the fetters and impoverishing privileges of the old corporate cities. The second impulsive epoch was the era of geographical discoveries, and the opening of new channels of trade with Turkey, the Levant, the East Indies, the north of Europe, and America. But the most important era, and main sources of greatness, are not of older date than about ninety years; and it is to the sudden development, in the latter half of the last and the present centuries, of steam, cotton, woollen, linen, iron, and earthenware, that the commercial and manufacturing towns are indebted for their rapid expansion in wealth and population.

The progress of civilisation is inseparable from the pursuits of commerce. Success in trade and manufactures, as previously observed, is compatible only with industry, economy, order, and punctuality. But it is creditable to the rise of the inland towns, that they had no sooner tasted the sweets of prosperity than it called into activity the benevolent impulses of humanity. The

foundation of the principal public charities of London is contemporary with the growth of its commercial opulence. As Bristol is the senior mercantile city next to the capital, it took the lead, and its institutions for indigence, disease, and education are almost innumerable, and with which the popular names of Canninge, Colston, Penn, and Queen Elizabeth are associated. Other towns followed the example; but as their flood of prosperity resulted less from commerce than the inventions of Lombe, Arkwright, and Watt, it was at a later period. About the middle of last century, hospitals and infirmaries began to be erected in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, for the reception of unfortunate workpeople, or the maladies peculiar to their respective occupations.

New developments ensued, as the opening of banks, the establishment of an exchange, of commercial rooms and chambers of commerce. A taste for science was next evinced. The Philosophical Society of Manchester, which has earned a deserved celebrity, was established in 1781; and fourteen years later had been formed an Agricultural Society in the same place,—one of the earliest of the kind in England. Liverpool erected her *Athenæum* in 1799, and her *Lyceum* in 1802, but had no Philosophical Society prior to 1814. The formation of valuable subscription libraries had preceded most of the philosophical associations. They contributed essentially to the diffusion of knowledge and literary taste, especially if aided, as they have been in some towns, by the formation of museums, botanical gardens, and annual exhibitions of the productions of the fine arts. “The highways of peaceful commerce have ever been the highways of the arts.”*

“Commercial states,” the Abbé Raynal remarks, “are

* Address of Cardinal Wiseman, Liverpool, August 30. 1853.

diffusive in their blessings. They not only civilise themselves, but others with which they come in contact and intercourse.”* But I will add the warning of the same philosophical writer—namely, that “Commerce is finally destroyed by the riches it accumulates, as despotic power is by its own usurpations.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GEORGE III.—THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

The Principle of Success in Revolutions.—Relative Progress of France and England.—France before her Revolution; its chief Social Ends realised, though a failure in Political Government.—Errors of the National Assembly of 1789.—Coalition of the Continental Powers.—War with England.—Reign of Terror; popular Frenzy and Extravagances of Republicanism.—Writings of Burke and Paine.—State of Public Opinion; Conduct of the Church.—Dissoluteness of Manners before the Revolution.—Negotiations of Lord Malmesbury.—Mr. Pitt's Compromise of Principle in the War.—II. OLD COURTS OF EUROPE BEFORE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.—The Bourbons in Spain and Naples.—Courts of Berlin and Vienna.—Polish Nobility.—Court of St. Petersburg; Catherine II.—Corruption of Diplomacy.—Imitations of the Ancients.—Memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith.—Reverses of Prussia and Austria.—III. EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION ON EUROPEAN SOCIETY.—Entry of the Allies into Paris; their Magnanimous Conduct.—Character of English and French Wars.—Influence of the Wars of England on Continental Institutions.—Prospects of Constitutional Government.

In all the material operations of Nature there seems a purpose, though it may be too obscure or remote for

* History of the East and West Indies.

present apprehension. Her ultimate design is assured, though she may compass it by gradual means or by forcible impulses at long intervals of time. In the changes of the seasons is an apt illustration of this admirable arrangement of vicissitudes, and the extremes of heat and cold do not usually set in until organic life has been tempered for the great transitions from summer to winter, or inversely by the intervening spring and autumn. The tidal flood, how beautifully it laves and almost imperceptibly extends over the beach ! It does not break in one overwhelming wave on the shore, but alternately recedes and advances, successive undulations gaining on the lessening strand till at length it rises to its maximum elevation.

A corresponding law of progress it is probable governs the great revolutions of the moral and political world. The colossal empires which have grown up and acquired stability have mostly been the work of lengthened periods, of a long course of subtle and persevering policy or aggressive ambition. Rome was not built in a day ; from eight to ten centuries were occupied in reaching her climax of territorial dominion. The histories of the great monarchies of the East, or even of the modern ones in course of consolidation, of China and Russia, are too remote or obscure in their commencement for their exact term of duration, past or future, to be assigned. The ephemeral empires of Timour and Zinghis, or of the first Napoleon, do not offer exceptional examples, but confirmations ; since these conquerors only overran the countries they mastered, never permanently subduing them, or lastingly assimilating them to any central authority by revolutionising their preexisting organic structure. The wide sway of Alexander the Great rose and dissolved with like rapidity ; it was the heroic achievement of

one campaign, and barely outlived the brief life of its brilliant founder.

For stability in great moral changes, time is an indispensable element for their abiding incorporation with the preexisting intelligence and condition of societies. A violent popular outbreak, or military usurpation, has in England, France, Italy, and Germany, repeatedly subverted institutions ; but the movement being premature, or not in harmony with the general sentiment and interests, they have revived again. For success and permanence a great revolution can only be compassed by instalments of progress, conformably with the laws of material nature, and, like the rising of a tempest, or the encroachments of the sea, be gradual in its approaches. Our religious advances strongly exemplify this principle of evolution. The seeds of ecclesiastical reform were sown by John Wickliff in the fourteenth century ; but two or three centuries more were requisite for them to permeate society and consummate the Protestant Reformation. Our political advancement has been a still more protracted struggle. The Great Charter of King John was the first chapter of the constitution, as of statute law ; it was often in abeyance, but its agitation and popular concessions never ceased to ferment and fashion men's minds even under the haughty Tudors ; till at length they acquired sufficient strength to be battled for with the Stuarts, and were finally guaranteed and made living elements of the constitution by the Revolution of 1688.

In both religious and political progress we had, to the close of the last century, taken the lead of our French neighbours. Up to 1789 they had failed to effect any great internal amelioration ; all continued feudalism and prerogative : but since this memorable epoch of European history France has been fertile in convulsions, and may

be still considered under her second imperial regime in the career of experimental revolution. Why this disparity of action in two nations with little other precedence of movement in civilised progress? The most probable solution appears to be that adverted to, resulting from the efforts of France being less conformable to the universal law which governs the great changes of the moral and material world. England has not only been less dilatory, but less precipitate in her advances, by which they became organic, from greater aptitude to existing wants and capabilities; while the longer deferred and more sweeping innovations of France have overstepped the necessity, and consequently failed in success, quietude, and permanence.

This is no impeachment of the purpose of either people; it only challenges the relative merit and rationality of procedure. Political revolutions, if avoidable, are not a desirable extremity in human affairs; they are seldom sought, but forced upon mankind, and, like the capital punishments inflicted on criminals, are resorted to in despair of the efficacy of milder remedies. It was this extremity which weighed on France in her first revolutionary movement. Civilisation had advanced, but shed none of its ameliorating influences over her institutions, which were those of the dark ages, and stood in glaring antagonism with existing wants and intelligence. The kingdom was divided into clashing provinces, the population into invidious classes. The nobility had lost all their powers, but retained all their privileges; the people had no rights, royalty no limits. Under her mediæval barbarism, the obstruction to progress in her feudal monarchy, privileged orders, municipal bodies, primogeniture and entail laws, with the incongruities and corruptions of her judicial administration,—France, in 1789, was in the condition of a great city which has outgrown its ancient

boundaries, and the nuisance of whose narrow streets, uncouth buildings, and anti-sanative condition can only be abated by a conflagration, an earthquake, or a deluge.

The visitation came, frightful in some of its aspects, but purifying and regenerative in final issues. The worn-out France of the Bourbons was rent in pieces, but a better state of society sprang from the ruins. The privileged sought to arrest the revolution ; united Europe to subject it ; and thus forced into a deadly conflict, France was unbounded in her efforts, and immoderate in her triumphs. A confederated aggression by despots from without rendered indispensable the cooperation of the masses within, by which the sovereignty of the multitude was first installed next that of the military. Yet the great ends were attained, despite of anarchy and despotism ; despite of the illusions of *la gloire*, of an immutable equality, and of human perfectibility ; and the heroic French have made permanent for themselves the substantial blessings of equal laws, equal taxation, freedom of internal industry, and a more productive partition of landed property.*

The last alone was worth the sacrifice. In Bourbon France were the two great demarcations — on one side spoliation and honours, on the other misery and degra-

* It has been stated by a writer well acquainted with France before and after the revolution, that lands yield one third more produce than they did previously to the taking of the Bastille. (*Nicholls's Recollections of the Reign of George III.*, p. 89.) It gave an impulse onward in another direction, as well as to rural industry, in the accelerated increase of population ; the yearly increase from 1801 to 1816 being 1·28 per cent., which is treble the annual rate of increase from the Peace to the census of 1851. (*Cabinet Gazetteer*, p. 374.) According to Baron Dupin, there died, on a yearly average from 1770 to 1790, the thirtieth part of a generation ; while a half century later the annual mortality amounted only to a fortieth part of the population, showing an increase of ten years upon the average life of Frenchmen. (*Westminster Review*, Jan. 1841.)

dation. The church received five millions of revenue from tithes ; and with nearly half the land of the kingdom besides, left only a wretched pittance of twenty pounds a year to the parish clergy, the rest being dissipated by the voluptuaries of the hierarchy. Landed property was so unequally divided that only one third of it was possessed by the commons, the ecclesiastics and nobles enjoying the rest. The taxes were so imposed that the *taille*, the largest of all, fell wholly upon the peasantry. The feudal grievances of France were heavier than in Bohemia or Hungary, and completed the misery of the people by affecting them in their subsistence, in their comforts, their personal freedom, and self-respect. What could be more unbearable than their game-laws, which obstructed almost every step in culture, harvest, or vintage, merely that seigneurs' amusements in partridges and hares might not be abridged ; while the said seigneurs, generally non-resident, had probably less interest in the soil than the peasant, being, as was till lately common in Ireland, from mortgages, entail, or other settlement, only the nominal, not real, proprietors.

All these entanglements of the soil, of privileges without interests, and of interests without rights, were swept away by the revolution ; but it was accompanied with enormous errors and crimes ; crimes partly of necessity, errors mostly of generosity, inexperience, and too favourable prepossessions of human virtue and intelligence. At the outset, however, the revolutionaries sought only just and practicable ameliorations. Their desires were to emulate ourselves ; and a constitutional monarchy, upon the English model, was the limit of their hopes. The throne, with its popular influence and traditions, formed the barrier around which they sought to shelter the newborn rights of liberty and equality. To advance further

the Girondists felt to be perilous, entering a boundless sea, of which the navigation was unknown. Yet, despite of foresight and apprehensions, into this abyss they were precipitated by an inevitable destiny ; the throne overthrown, and France, in her efforts at reconstruction, was left without rule or compass.

For this initiative aberration three reasons may be given :— first, the commonplace one, that concession to popular demands leads to others ; and the position was taken up that the revolution must necessarily advance ; that it was a *Juggernaut*, whose progress neither the monarchy, the church, nor aristocracy ought to arrest. A second and more potent cause was the unreasonableness of the conflicting parties ; the privileged orders would yield nothing, and no extent of concession would satisfy the oppressed. From this absence of compromise resulted the third great derangement, of foreign intervention. Menaced with the loss of their possessions, the emigrant princes and nobles sought the aid of strangers ; and to resist this aggression the masses were appealed to ; arms were given them, and their ignorance and passions enlisted in the interests of the revolution. By this appeal the country was saved ; but all the subsequent chapter of woes—the Reign of Terror and bloody dissensions of the republic, with the not less bloody wars of the continent—originated. Exposed to this terrible ordeal within and without, France long struggled ; but, after astounding feats of heroism and resource, reached the land of promise. True, a chimerical republic was not perpetuated, but all the great national grievances which had roused popular vengeance and provoked the revolution, were guaranteed. These have not been lost to the people, only at the worst partly suspended under Napoleon I., Louis Philippe, and Napoleon III.

The cycle of the revolution, in its ascending and descending phases, is instructive beyond any preceding page of history, and cannot be too emphatically dwelt upon, both in its successes and failures. Our great civil struggles in the seventeenth century anticipated many of its aspects, but never subjected the country to like trials or extremities. The crown and the commons were left free to contest their respective claims, and no external party interfered in the quarrel. Power never fell to a lower level than that of the middle and yeomanry classes; consequently the great peril of France was never experienced; and to preserve our nationality we were never compelled to enthrone the sovereign multitude in place of the subverted monarchy, church, and peerage. Had the like imperative necessity been felt in England as in France, it is likely the revolutionary career of the two nations would have approximated to closer resemblance both in misfortunes and improvements.

The first or constituent National Assembly of France, which was formed out of the States-General convened in 1789, was eminently patriotic. Its purpose was to regenerate a feudal kingdom, and nobly it fulfilled its mission; but, from inexperience or excess of magnanimity, it fell into grave errors. After prescribing the new social and political edifice of France, they passed a resolution, by which, for two years from the dissolution, the members should be disqualified for re-election, or accepting any office in the government. It was a generous but mistaken act of self-denial. It was emulating the conduct of Lycurgus, who, after giving laws to Sparta, took no share in their execution, but withdrew into obscurity. But it proved practically injurious. The legislature, or second National Assembly, which met in 1791, was inferior to the first, without its knowledge and moderation;

instead of consolidating and improving, it perverted the institutions of its predecessor. The second preliminary error, by which the Constituent Assembly prematurely dissolved itself, was a kindred mistake to the first, but more objectionable. Having evoked the revolution, they ought to have survived to guide it.* They were the architects of new institutions, demanding time to settle, and it was essential they should maintain their unity to amend and control their practical administration. Their apprehension seemed to be, lest by perpetuating their power they should imitate the usurpation of the Long Parliament of England; a body of men whom they transcended both in patriotism and the magnitude of their proceedings. All the errors of this illustrious body, however, leaned to virtue's side, were errors of inexperience, enthusiasm, and over-confidence in human nature. Probably one of the most pregnant overpowering sources of perversion in the political regeneration of France, was in the dominant influence acquired by the capital. The national representatives legislated for France, but Paris legislated for the national representatives. Had the intelligence and moderation of the metropolis governed, or even a majority of its inhabitants, the calamity might have been less; but they did not; it was a minority, infuriated by ignorance and destitution, which ruled. In place of the delegated will of the nation acting for the common good, was substituted the wild projects of the sixty communes into which Paris was subdivided, guided by mistaken zealots aiming at impracticabilities, or by unprincipled agitators scheming for selfish or ambitious purposes. Among these petty municipalities, aided by affiliated societies in the pro-

* History of the French Revolution, by F. A. Mignet, Member of the Institute of France. A lucid and masterly epitome of its civil progress from 1789 to 1814. Bogue, 1846.

vinces, the Jacobins were omnipotent. The entire people were excited by them, and from rivals they soon became masters of the National Assembly. "A member," says M. Dumont, "who had no influence with the Assembly, had only to affect exaggerated democracy, and he became a hero among the Jacobins. These societies became hothouses, in which every venomous plant which could not be made to grow in the open air was forced to maturity."* It was from this soil the demons of terror—Robespierre, Marat, Danton, St. Just, and Couthon—sprung, and derived their fleeting ascendancy. Except Marat, they were young lawyers, whose ages averaged about thirty years; mistaken enthusiasts as well as furious demagogues. Fear was their great instrument of government. Neither age, sex, nor condition virtue, services, science, nor literature was spared, if suspected of designs against the republic, or, more often and truly, plots against themselves. The unhappy Girondists were the first sacrifice to the Moloch of anarchy. "The glory of France," says Madame de Staël, "was decimated in the deaths of Roland, Malesherbes, Baily, Lavoisier, Vergniand, Guadet, and Condorcet."† The anarchists next fell upon each other. Robespierre and Danton combined against the Hebertists and Cordeliers; these immolated by their joint efforts, Robespierre turned against his accomplice, sacrificed him, and then the victor in this deadly struggle fell himself a victim to his confederates in crime—Barrere, Tallien, Bourdon de L'Oise, and Billaud Varennes.

The elect of the clubs having perished by the hands of each other, France began to breathe from internal slaughter. After the fall of Robespierre, the National

* Recollections of Mirabeau, p. 284.

† Considerations on the French Revolution, vol. ii. p. 121.

Convention, which in 1792 had replaced the Legislative Assembly, vested the executive power in a Directory of five persons, four of whom were Jacobins ; but, though of that party, they found no government compatible with its principles of constant insurrection and popular excitement. Jacobinism had addressed itself to the passions, abstract rights, and apparent interests of the people, which elicited all their energies in the public cause. The stimuli were eminently successful ; and it is possible that the reckless career of the Terrorists saved France from the foreign aggression which the more wavering and scrupulous policy of the Girondists might have failed to accomplish. But, their mission fulfilled, it was desirable the head magistracy of the guillotine should cease.

The Directory proceeded with caution, but vigour and perseverance. The first point to compass was to annihilate the disturbing influence of clubs, which, with the aid of the populace, had prescribed the deposition and trial of Louis XVI. The meetings of the Jacobins were suppressed, and all attempts at their revival defeated. The more violent of them were gradually weeded from the municipalities of Paris and from the government offices. Inflammatory journals were suppressed, and, to curtail the influence of popular clamour, the galleries of the Convention for spectators were reduced. The Jacobins felt their power being undermined ; tenacious of political life, they tried, by repeated insurrections, to recover their ascendancy ; their last effort was the unsuccessful conspiracy of Babeuf in 1796.* The Directory persevered in its policy of conciliating the moderate and repressing the violent, till its dissolution in 1799, when it was superseded by the Consulate.†

* British History, by the author, p. 598., 5th edit. Bohn.

† A contemporary witness says, “ Bonaparte gave security in

Beyond this stage it is unnecessary to follow France in her civil commotions. Under General Bonaparte the illusion of liberty was succeeded by the illusion of military glory. The new fascination was based upon the model of imperial Rome. The emulation of ancient examples of heroism may be reckoned among the *egaremens* of the revolution. Chivalry, courtesy, and gallant deeds in arms were the embellishments of feudalism, and yielded to the new inspiration. It animated the successive legislative bodies, the victorious legions of the republic, and the million of citizens who rushed to the frontier to repel invasion. The illustrious Cato and the Brutii, Aristides and Epaminondas, emblazoned the oratory of ministers and senators; while the warriors who led the conquering armies caught the flame of patriotism from the heroes of Plutarch. It was in this school that the embryo Cæsar, who first made himself famous by his brilliant Italian campaigns, had been trained. Bonaparte was modelled on the antique, and exemplified its vices and virtues in his extraordinary career. All, however, is not bright in the history of old Rome. If its proud, indomitable spirit mastered nations, it remorselessly plundered them, and rioted in the spoils of a conquered world. It cannot be accepted as the true standard of national greatness; and the imitation by the French revolutionaries unhappily partook of the imperfections of the original. If Rome was fertile in heroes, it had also its demons; if it had its godlike Scipios or conscript fathers, whom neither the fierce Gaul nor victorious Hannibal could appal, it had also its bloody proscriptionists in Sylla and Marius, Mark Antony and Octavius, just as France had her Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. A great modern nation flourishing 2000 years later ought to have improved upon place of the horrors of the revolution, and that reconciles every one to his usurpation." — *Romilly's Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 100.

its copy, and not slavishly emulated both its barbarous and patriotic deeds.

The apotheosis of liberty was a proximate Roman flight, savouring more of Paganism than national advancement. If liberty be the sole god, what avails civilisation? The naked savage, who does all that he wills or can, has this liberty in greatest license. But the civilised man, who lives for others as well as himself, aspires to a higher status. He, too, has liberty, but it is an equal liberty, in common with those around him. This is true liberty—liberty, equality, and fraternity—the security of which the revolutionaries tended to weaken by the extinction of the social guarantees which civilisation has reclaimed from the waste of barbarism. It is not man in a natural state who is free, or enjoys an enviable existence; he possesses nothing, because he is secure of nothing. It is the man in society who is really free, because he is made secure by laws, in his person, his industry, and his property.

It is impossible to forbear smiling—and the French must now smile—at the extravagances to which the last generation was precipitated by a ludicrous perversion of the most obvious elements of society. It was the Legislative Assembly and the National Convention which inaugurated the chief follies. Freedom was personified in the person of a woman sitting upon a bundle of arms, having in her hand a pike surmounted with the cap of liberty. Titles and all heraldic devices were abolished; in place of monsieur, citizen was substituted in personal address. Everything importing inferiority or subordination was strictly repudiated. No workman would accompany his employer in the streets, unless allowed to walk by his side!*

* Comparative View of Social Life in England and France, vol. ii. p. 46.

The same contemporary observer, Miss Berry, informs us that those full of the old Roman appeared habited in pants, in short waistcoats with sleeves, short hair, and a club or stout stick in hand.* Anything symptomatic of obedience, effeminacy, or luxury was discarded; and a strong effort at nude utility was made, by trying to convert the garden of the Tuileries into a kitchen garden.†

More serious issues than these classical imitations resulted from the unhappy efforts of the royalists to regain ascendancy. The first adverse movement which awakened suspicion was the flight of the nobles and Bourbon princes. The king (June 20. 1791) next attempted to escape, leaving indubitable proofs of insincerity in a document by which he revoked his past declarations in favour of reform. War with Austria ensued, and in July of the following year appeared the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, threatening with military execution all who insulted the royal family, or resisted the Austro-Prussian armies in the invasion of France. This indiscreet denunciation, addressed to a high-spirited and then excited population, precipitated all the calamities it was meant to avert. Indignant at foreign intervention, and suspecting the king of secretly coalescing with German powers, popular fury was directed against all suspected of royalism, and Paris, in the months of August and September, became the scene of frightful disorders. Meanwhile, from sickness and other miscarriages, the allied

* Comparative View of Social Life, vol. ii. p. 133.

† Ibid. p. 333. A contemporary already quoted (p. 568.) relates that the "volunteers who were setting out for the frontiers, after taking the oaths in the Hôtel de Ville, walked deliberately up to the statue of Louis XIV., which had been thrown down, and — upon it, amidst the laughter of bystanders." — *Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly, by his Sons*, vol. ii. p. 28.

invasion had utterly failed, and Brunswick was in full retreat.* In Belgium the French, led by Dumourier, had won the victory of Gemappe, and in the middle of November the same general entered Brussels in triumph. These successes produced a delirium of joy; the people had heroically surmounted every danger; they had conquered their freedom, and in the enthusiasm of the moment they began to feel for the bondage of neighbouring states.

Pending this fit of cosmopolitan sympathy appeared the famous decree of the National Convention of November 19. 1792. It was passed by acclamation, and declared "that they would grant fraternity and assistance to all peoples desirous of liberty," and the executive armies were charged to act in conformity with this announcement. This was a sudden and ominous transition in public policy. The National Assembly had previously announced that it would never make war except in self-defence; but the new version savoured strongly of aggression. It was so considered by the English government, but the French minister explained that it did not apply to the state of England, already free,—only to the continental despotisms.† There were, however, other acts tending to show that France, flushed by her victories, was fast assuming an altered attitude towards foreign

* The Duke of Brunswick, then in the seventy-first year of his age, had a French actress, his mistress, in the camp with him during this memorable campaign.—*Diaries of Lord Malmesbury*, vol. iv. p. 357.

† The landed gentry, we learn from contemporary authority, "were terribly frightened at the spread of democracy;" but it was the death of the king and the offer of fraternisation which precipitated the war.—*Memoirs of the Court and Cabinet of George III.*, by the Duke of Buckingham, p. 228.

powers. Contrary to treaty, the navigation of the Scheldt and the Meuse were declared free to all nations. By another decree of the Convention, the conquered duchy of Savoy was erected into an eighty-fourth department of the one and indivisible republic. On December 21st, the trial of the unfortunate Louis XVI. began at the bar of the Convention ; it concluded on January 16th, and on January 21st, 1793, he was beheaded. This catastrophe had a momentous influence, both in determining popular sympathies in respect to the revolution, and the policy of the English government.

Three days after the king's execution, M. Chauvelin was ordered to quit the kingdom. On the 27th of January the court went into mourning, and this was generally done in London. Next day a message from the king was delivered to parliament, informing it that he had determined to join the allies in opposing the ambition of France and the propagation of principles subversive of the order of all civil society. Upon this message an animated debate ensued : on one side were arrayed the delinquencies of France in the execution of the king and her restless ambition ; on the other, those of the allies in the Brunswick manifesto and dismemberment of Poland. It was not till the 18th of February that the war policy of ministers was brought to the test of a division. On that day Mr. Fox submitted five resolutions, stating the specific grounds on which the opposition differed from the ministers as to the necessity of hostilities. Only 44 members voted in their favour, 270 voting for the previous question. The sentiments of the people, if taken by poll, not intelligence, were probably in an equal proportion warlike with those of the House of Commons.

Up to this crisis, England had continued an anxious

but abstinent spectator of continental affairs.* The subversive tendency of the French revolution, in the early and principal stages of its career, had been felt by the considerate to have been unavoidable. It had to deal with the accumulated abuses of centuries, and it was indispensable to clear the ground prior to the erection of a new social edifice. But the end of a necessary revolution is not the destruction, but the improvement, of society. “The talent for destroying,” said the elder Mirabeau (the father of the fiery orator of the National Assembly), “is the reverse of the art of reforming; it is the desperation of the suicide. An ignorant surgeon will amputate the limb that the science of Esculapius would have cured.” It was therefore renovation in an improved and stable form, consistently with the avowed aims of the revolution at the commencement, which had begun to be impatiently expected. But the convulsions of France had continued three years without any appearance of a settlement; and what rendered the future more disheartening was, that the views of her rulers seemed to have changed with her fortunes; and not content with self-reform, they had evinced a disposition to retaliate upon the continental despotisms leagued against them their own policy, by an aggressive intermeddling with the affairs of neighbouring states.

It can hardly be doubted that these new indications

* The policy of government was a conservative neutrality. Lord Grenville, writing to the Duke of Buckingham, Nov. 9. 1792, just after the disastrous close of the Brunswick campaign in France, says, “I bless God that we had the wit to keep out of the noise and enterprise of the grand armies, and that we were not tempted by the hope of sharing the spoils in the division of France, nor by the prospect of crushing every vestige of the democratic principle all over the world.”—*Court and Cabinet of George III.*, p. 234.

largely contributed to fashion the general sentiment of England in 1793. The subversion of the feudal institutions of France in 1789 met, with rare exceptions, the approval of all parties.* It was thought—and the more distinguished leaders among the French thought the same—that they were only about to follow the successful example of England in the career of political regeneration. This impression continued with little abatement for two or three years longer. It is certain that, in the early part of 1792, the English government saw no danger impending from France to warrant intervention in her affairs. That war was neither foreseen nor desired is manifest from the peaceful tenor of the king's speeches to parliament and those of his ministers. On opening the session, George III. recommended a further reduction in naval and military establishments. Mr. Pitt, in submitting his financial statement †, indulged in a glowing picture of national prosperity, declaring that it "went beyond what the most sanguine could anticipate." In the course of the summer he said, "England had never a fairer prospect of a long continuance of peace. I think we may confidently reckon on *peace for ten years.*" ‡

At a little earlier period Mr. Burke had not been more prescient of the issues of the revolution ; he held that, France being "expunged out of the system of Europe, all consideration about the balance of power was at an end ;" and urged a reduction in the peace establish-

* In a letter, dated July 28. 1789, Sir Samuel Romilly writes:—"It [the Revolution] is the subject of all conversation ; and even all the newspapers, without one exception, though they are not conducted by the most liberal and philosophical of men, join in sounding forth the praises of the Parisians, and in rejoicing at an event so important to mankind."—*Memoirs, by his Sons*, vol. i. p. 356.

† House of Commons, Feb. 17. 1792.

‡ Nicholls's Recollections of George III., p. 137.

ment.* But at the end of 1792 the fearful storm had suddenly gathered, and a change had come over the public mind of both France and England. The French were no longer the same people after the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick and their brilliant campaign under Dumourier in the Netherlands. The national energies had been evoked; they had triumphed, and were rejoiced beyond measure at the discomfiture of a coalition which had menaced them with chains and slavery. Republicanism became the glowing faith of its adherents, and their zeal in its propagation hardly less than that of the early Christians. Enfranchisement was deemed a universal right, and that all nations ought to share its blessings. It was this fierce and overt avowal of propagandism which disturbed the quietude of England, especially her predominant influences in the monarchy, the church, peerage, municipal and mercantile bodies. Secondary causes accelerated the English fermentation in the savage excesses of the Parisian populace, the exaggerated representations of French royalists who fled in shoals to this country, and the inflammatory writings of Edmund Burke, though these were partly neutralised by the counter publications of Paine and Mackintosh, and the tracts issued by the Society of the Friends of the People.

* House of Commons, February 9. 1790. At a later period Mr. Burke was not more happy in anticipation. In a lachrymose epistle to Mrs. Crewe, dated May 21. 1797, he says,—“ If I shall live much longer I shall see an end of all that is worth living for in this world ; ” doubtless a questionable forecast in the estimate of many.

Mr. Burke had not the gift of prophecy ; he had eloquence and fancy, but was too vehement for penetration and judgment. Lord Holland says he “ did not disapprove of the French revolution till the church revenues were confiscated. Burke had no predilection for particular tenets, but thought outward show and pomp essential to maintain the influence of the established worship.”—*Memoirs of the Whig Party in my Time.*

Dodsley the publisher sold 18,000 copies of Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution," and from the profits made a handsome compliment to the author. Paine's "Rights of Man" went through three editions in a fortnight. After remarking on their literary defects, Romilly adds, "With all that, they are full of spirit and energy, and likely to produce a very great effect."* The excitement of revolutions is the carnival of political conceits, and the hotbed of extravagances on all sides. At the time of the Birmingham riots the common cry of the mob was,—"No philosophers—Church and King for ever!"† The zeal awakened for the interests of the Church appeared more vehement than for any other order of the State, and almost as rampant as in the fiery days of Sacheverell. Consequently the Dissenters were an especial object against which the reigning furor was directed; and besides being assailed in pamphlets of a serious character, were ridiculed and burlesqued in satirical songs and poems, many of which incited the populace to insult and abuse them. A lawyer of Birmingham, named Morfit, appears to have been the author of one of these; it is a parody on "God save the King," and preserved in Mr. Wright's "Pictorial History of Songs" (vol. ii. p. 189.), from which is inserted the following stanzas:—

"Old mother Church disdains
The vile Dissenting strains
That round her ring;
She keeps her dignity,
And, scorning faction's cry,
Sings with sincerity
‘God save the King.’"

* Memoirs, by his Sons, vol. i. p. 417.

† Ibid. p. 449.

“Sedition is their creed ;
 Feigned *sheep*, but *wolves* indeed,
 How can we trust ?
 Gunpowder Priestley would
 Deluge the throne with blood,
 And lay the great and good
 Low in the dust.

“History, thy page unfold ;
 Did not their sires of old
Murder their king ?
 And they would overthrow
 King, lords, and bishops too,
 And, while they gave the blow,
 Loyally sing.”

Another popular ballad was directed against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts :—

“Peers, knights, and squires, in league combined,
 Protect your Good Old Mother ;
 For should the beldame slip her wind,
 You’ll ne’er see such another.

“Two hundred years and more the Dame
 Has tightly held together ;
 Her glorious motto, ‘ Still the same,’
 In spite of wind and weather.

“Her babes of grace, with tender care,
 She fed on dainty dishes ;
 And none but they have had a share
 Among the loaves and fishes !”

The Church was not alone made nervous. The gay world was perturbed, annoyed, and perhaps improved, by the numerous publications which appeared, exposing the dissipations of high life. The Earl of March, afterwards Duke of Queensberry, the great *roué* of his day, and before alluded to (p. 489.), felt very sore from these expositions.

On one occasion, Lord Brougham relates, his grace, who, though a libertine, was frank and penetrating in judgment, was denouncing their pernicious tendency,—“ Ay, indeed,” interpolated a parasite of his lordship, “ and so full of falsehood.” “ No, indeed,” said the duke, “ not falsehood,—they are all so *true* ; that is what makes them so abominable.”* The rage for gambling and profligacy of every kind, had risen to a high pitch, both in England and France, some years before the revolution, and the example of *Le Crème* had descended to the skimmed and blue milk of society. The popular writings of the day attest this declension in manners, and the newspapers are profusely sprinkled with announcements offering the means of indulgences. Instead of advertisements for wives, are advertisements for mistresses, with others offering preventives to avert the consequences of illicit intercourse ; or, if that failed, of screening the mother by other contrivances from scandal. “ The reign of George III.,” says Mr. Wright, “ was especially the age of adultery in this country, which had really taken its place among the fashions of the day ; and that crime had become almost a mania in the higher classes.”† Morals were still more flagrant in France. In the “ European Magazine” for August 1785, it is stated that there are no less than 400 divorces pending before the parliament of Paris, and 800 more, for offenders of less degree, before the Chatelets.

These may be reckoned among the minor precursors of the revolution. Licentiousness appears to have been more rife among the married and more mature in age, than among the younger and unmarried. It seems difficult to account for the excess of connubial depravity, unless it be

* Edinburgh Review, July, 1844.

† England under the House of Hanover, vol. ii. p. 340.

traced to the example set by royalty. Horace Walpole remarks *, that it was a most observed etiquette at the court of France, that the king's mistress should be a *married* woman ; and the rule was generally observed in England under the first princes of the Hanover family. It may have had its origin, as Walpole suggests, in the wish to avert derogatory nuptials, like that of Louis XIV. with Madame Maintenon ; or it may have been that sexual irregularities in the simpler form wanted the zest of the more criminal license of adultery.

From this digression I resume the course of more public occurrences. Up to the close of 1792, France appears to have been desirous of avoiding a rupture with England. It might be from sympathy with our free institutions, or from a desire to complete the humiliation of her continental adversaries before she entered on a naval war with this country. Neither, however, was sufficient to determine the policy of England. The question was entirely one of contingent danger, either internally to our institutions, by the aggressive spirit of republicanism evinced by the Convention, or externally, to our national independence, from the thirst of conquest France had displayed by new territorial annexations. England might be only reserved to be dealt with on a more favourable opportunity ; and in the new phase the Revolution had assumed, France might be bent on emulating her Roman prototype by establishing universal dominion. If compatible with security, in her existing frenzy, a more protracted peace was, from the lively interest and sympathy between the two nations, a doubtful contingency. There must almost of necessity be either fusion or antagonism. England must become republican or hostile ; monarchy could hardly co-

* Memoirs of the Reign of George III., vol. iv. p. 10.

exist with the proselyting zeal of our Celtic neighbours, seconded as it was by some active but not very numerous converts in this country.

Whether war or peace was most politic in this memorable juncture of national affairs must remain a debateable question. Of the great calamities entailed by the war, posterity is fully conscious ; but what might have been the issues of peace, can only be matter of conjecture. Further investigation, therefore, of this difficult problem could not possibly lead to any demonstrative conclusion, since it could at best be only speculative, from proceeding, on one side, on an untried foundation. In the then constitution of the government and state of public opinion, hostilities appear to have been unavoidable. Had Mr. Pitt refused to go to war, he would have been driven from power by the united voice of the king and people ; and his successor, whether Whig or Tory, would have been compelled to pursue the course of policy which is understood to have been only reluctantly followed by that celebrated minister.

The alternative of war resolved upon involved awful perils. At the outset the chances appeared all in favour of the combined powers. England had recovered from the reverses of the American war, and was overflowing with riches. The continental states, with which she allied herself, had been similarly prosperous, and for a longer period. There had been no general war on the continent since the peace of 1763 ; and in the interval great advances had been made in wealth and population. France stood singly to combat the might and resources of Europe. But her noble fortitude, devotedness to new institutions, the heroic zeal and abilities of her self-taught generals, seconded by the enthusiastic valour of their troops, proved more than a match for her enemies. Before the

end of the year she had fourteen armies in the field, and 1,022,902 men actually embodied.* The terrible Convention, which exercised legislative and executive power, proved equal to the emergency. It destroyed the monarchy, as well as the bloody factions which successively rose in its own bosom; transformed the refuse of cities into conquering heroes, and created ample resources out of the spoils of foes and traitors for battling with the legions of the coalition. In Holland, in Belgium, and on the Rhine, the French were victorious. Failure of success led to disunion among the allies. Prussia was the first to make peace with the Republic, but not till after receiving the English subsidy for another campaign, which she perverted to a further dismemberment of Poland. In 1795, Spain, Sardinia, and Tuscany had followed her recreant example. Russia had taken no active part; the Empress Catherine only contributing her good wishes for the success of the confederacy.

In 1796, the moment seemed favourable for England withdrawing from a hopeless contest. The object of the war was unattained and unattainable. The Bourbon cause was hopeless; and the "march to Paris," which Lord Hawkesbury had trumpeted forth as the goal of the coalition, had proved a dear-bought illusion. France, in the language of Mr. Pitt, had become "an armed nation." Anarchy had subsided after the dispersion of the Terrorists, and a government of apparent stability had been established. With the return of order and humanity, the hostile feelings of the English had been assuaged. Titles and tithes, municipalities and property, were no longer in

* On the 15th of August, 1793, the project of a *levee-en-masse* was introduced by Barrère; it allowed of no substitutes, and was the beginning of that formidable instrument of military power, the conscription.

jeopardy. Under these altered signs, the government was disposed to negotiate, and despatched Lord Malmesbury to Paris on a pacific mission. Doubts were entertained whether the British Government were sincere in their overtures; but they have been removed by the publication of the "Harris Papers," and the failure may be ascribed to the French Directory, who, either flushed with success, or thinking France had had the best of the contest, indignantly rejected the offered basis of treaty by a mutual restitution of conquests.*

* Mr. Pitt was desirous of peace. He said, in 1797, that "it was his duty as an English minister and a Christian to use every effort to stop so bloody and wasting a war." (*Malmesbury Diaries*, vol. iii. p. 369.) His earlier and higher duty was never to have begun the war, if his own convictions were adverse to its policy or justice. He ought to have retired, and not, by continuing in office, given countenance either to patrician or popular delusion, if contrary to the public interests. Ministers are bound to steer the people the right course, not, with their hands on the helm and their eyes open, suffer them to be carried among rocks and quicksands. Lord North is responsible for similar delinquency, in compromising his own convictions, by yielding to the views of George III. on the American war. The king held that the independence of the colonies would be detrimental to British sovereignty; Lord Chatham concurred in this sentiment; and the Earl of Sherburne said, that when America became independent the ruin of England would set. They were all probably sincere; the king undoubtedly was, and he was only blameable for the obstinacy with which he clung to his opinion. The position of his minister was different, and the judgment of Lord John Russell, upon his continuing to direct a war he was in sentiment opposed to, seems just: "He [Lord North] was disposed to conciliate America, had sent commissioners for that purpose, and was quite ready to consent to peace. For three years he had been of opinion his own ministry was feeble, and would effect no good purpose. Why, then, did he remain? *To carry into effect the personal wishes of the sovereign, which he preferred to the welfare of the state.* This may be Toryism; but it is not patriotic, still less is it

The rupture of the negotiations may be considered unfortunate. Had peace been concluded, European civilisation would have been accelerated twenty years. England would have had a less debt to liquidate by 400 millions ; there would have been no Irish Rebellion, Mutiny at the Nore, or Bank Restriction Act. The Nelson Column or Waterloo Arch would not have been erected ; the capitals of the Continent would have escaped the humiliation of foreign occupation. Moscow would not have been burnt, nor half a million of warriors mutilated or killed by the severities of a Russian winter ; in short, the history of the period to many would have been dull, from the less amount of human calamities and crimes, and would have afforded fewer exciting themes for Sir Archibald Alison's "European History," or M. Thiers's *emblazonry* of the "Consulate and the Empire." In lieu, however, we should have had extraordinary internal improvements, superb architectural embellishments, amicable international rivalries in commerce, industry, the arts, sciences, and literature ; and their elevating influences would not have continued to float on the surface, but have penetrated deep into the social fabric of both England and the continental nations.

These glimpses of the probable future may suffice, without dwelling on the familiar topics of the vicissitudes of the war. The more pertinent inquiry of the present section is, the adverse or favourable influence of the French Revolution on European progress. Its meliorative action on the condition of France may be considered a settled question, from the previous contrast of its antecedent miserable state and subsequent prosperity. Eng-constitutional conduct." (*Memorials and Correspondence of Mr. Fox*, p. 247.) His lordship's strictures apply equally to Mr. Pitt, in relation to the French war.

land may be also passed over, as a topic already elucidated in previous pages; her revolution was an accomplished fact, and had borne its fruits, and it might have been more happy for the political future of France and the German nations, who in their later risings in 1848 sought to emulate her example, had they limited, in common with ourselves, their aspiration to a well-defined constitutional monarchy. That the entire of the continental governments had need of regeneration prior to the commencement of the great revolutionary drama of 1789, will, I imagine, be conceded, after the brief outline I shall subjoin of the state of the old Courts of the Continent. German manners were too much below the standard England had attained, before the accession of the Hanover family, to be nationally seductive; but their low libertine character has been indicated at the close of the reign of George I.

II. OLD COURTS OF EUROPE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

It has been said that savages never reform themselves. Would there be more hope in royalty or aristocracy if sunk to an extreme level of depravity? The gipsy tribes and mendicant classes offer an example of long-inherited degradation, and the patrician orders of ancient and modern times have exhibited hardly less constancy of type, if free from external influences. The absence of any spontaneous effort at improvement in the two extremes of society presents a curious social problem; and it has been sought to be explained on a former occasion (p. 386.) on the supposition that there is, in truth, great identity of manners and indulgences between princes and tinkers, however much the former may impose upon the world by external pomp and ceremony. Startling as this conclusion may be, it is not entirely without foundation, and results from that salutary check on conduct which

disciplines the rest of the community. From elevation of status the highest circles are above the control of public opinion ; the lowest are beneath it: so that both social extremes are free to live and riot as they please ; but the intermediate classes enjoy no such license, and are under strict responsibility for their sayings and doings.

The antecedent proposition, that among the higher classes there is not likely to be either the power or inclination to self-regeneration, is still more probable. The histories of the royal houses of Stuart and Bourbon are melancholy records of unimprovability. Without the revolution, what hope of reform was there in the old court of France ? It could never have emerged from the infamy of the *Parc au Cerfs* of Louis XV.*, or the more dazzling vainglory, concubinage, and superstition of Louis XIV. Louis XVI. suffered for the sins of his predecessors, though less culpable than either ; but the unhappy Marie Antoinette, the fair ideal of " Burke's Chivalry," if Madame Campan can be believed, formed no exception to the general dissoluteness of royalty. It was a revolution, or what was equivalent to a revolution, by the removal of the electoral court of Hanover to England, that effected its purification. Even the two first German princes withheld the refining influence of a better atmosphere ; and it was only on the accession of George III., who was born and bred a Briton, that the court of St. James's became more observant of the decencies of life.

* The youngest and most beautiful girls the procurors of the king could discover in Paris and the provinces were impressed for the royal conservatory. One hundred and fifty thousand francs a month were allowed to defray expenses. (*Swinburne's Courts of Europe at the Close of the last Century.*) The amount of other items wrung from the toils of industry, to give lustre to the Pompadours and Du Barrys, does not appear.

No cotemporary improvement ensued in the courts of the continent. The first Earl of Malmesbury, in his diplomatic missions to the principal of them, found them corrupt in political administration, and grossly licentious in manners. Spain was then, as she still continues, pre-eminent for the weakness of her government, badness of her roads, and the dirt and laziness of her people. But these are ascribed by his lordship "not to the national character of the Spaniards, but to the influence of their religion and its priests, which, by keeping the lower people in a state of mendicity, and the higher in one of ignorance, deprived both of the possibility of improving their minds." Princes suffered more than their subjects from this repressive ascendancy, especially the Bourbon family, most of the members of which had sunk into utter mental incapacity. The reigning king of Spain, Charles III., was on a level with his contemporary, Louis XV., in France, and little superior in intellect to the unfortunate son he had excluded from the throne of Naples in favour of a younger brother, on account of imbecility. Better training might have made something of the crown prince of Spain, but he was abandoned to childish amusements and unimproving occupations. "He plays," says the earl, "on the fiddle an hour every day, more because he is used to do it, than from any taste for music. He generally, except during this hour, and those of his meals, occupies the whole day in hunting; and in the evening assembles the exempts and other young courtiers, with whom he plays at lottery, on tickets—after the manner of the Archbishop of Canterbury with his chaplains—since he always wins."* This hopeful

* *Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, first Earl of Malmesbury, edited by his Grandson, vol. i. p. 53.*

successor became the Charles IV. against whom Bonaparte practised the perfidious acts of tyranny which roused the indignation of Europe, and laid the foundation of his own downfall. The king early became the dupe of his consort, a clever but dissolute woman. It was this queen who made such a noise in Europe by her intrigues with Godoy, then a captain in the guards and afterwards prince of Peace, and who was shameless enough, in the presence of her husband and Napoleon, to proclaim her conjugal infidelity in respect of Ferdinand VII.

Incongruities of another kind were found at Berlin. Here neither hunting nor superstition bore sway. A great prince ruled, great in intellect, war, fortitude, industry, and in his aim to raise a petty state into a first-class kingdom. Frederick II., however, seems to have been more eminent for cleverness and accomplishment than wisdom or high principle. He was a tasteful musician, a mediocre poet, and a painstaking historian. But what he did for Prussia was as much the result of finesse and robbery as heroism and statesmanship. He seized on Silesia under the pretext of a material guarantee for a pretended claim; but the true reason, as he himself avowed*, was the well-filled treasury left by his prede-

* Upon his invasion of Silesia he writes to Podevils, — “ I give you a problem to solve: when a man has an advantage, should he make use of it or not? I have my troops and everything needful for war in readiness. If I neglect to use them, I hold in my hands a possession which I know not how to employ. Whereas, if I do make use of my advantage, people will say I know how to use my superiority over my neighbour.” Precisely the law of the strongest, that is, of barbarians —

“ The good old plan
That he shall take who has the power,
And he shall keep who can.”

cessor, and a well-disciplined army, which enabled him to take advantage of the weakness of Maria Theresa's government to sever from the empire one of its most valuable provinces. He was not more scrupulous in his dealings with his own subjects ; forcing upon their acceptance a counterfeit coinage, and scourging them with odious monopolies for the sake of hoarding money, in lieu of leaving it for industrial fructification in the hands of the people. Avarice was his dominant foible ; he often spoiled a court ball by a too stingy allowance of candles, the placing of which he directed with as much anxiety as that of his battalions on the field of battle. His treatment of the unfortunate Baron Trenck is an indelible stain on his memory. No doubt the baron was a refractory and probably not a faithful subject ; and his obdurate persistence in an intrigue with a younger sister of the king, after caution given, was deep provocation ; still it was unworthy of a great monarch to wage revengeful war against a wilful individual so far beneath him in power. He relented, but too late to be of service to his victim. Frederick was not naturally cruel or unjust ; but despots were spoiled children, and made wayward and capricious by irresponsible indulgences. These, and the very bad school in which the king had been reared, may partly account for the tyrannical humours of his reign. The brutalities to which he had been familiarised in early life, and of which, in common with others, he was the subject, have been adverted to in the reign of George I. (p. 384.).

The Prussian capital in 1773 shared in the worst vices of the court — penurious and licentious. Seaports and garrison towns—and Berlin was the last—are notorious for immorality, probably arising from the same cause as produced the irregularities of the monks, namely, the

privations of celibacy. "Berlin," says Lord Malmesbury, "is a town where, if *fortis* may be construed honest, there is neither *vir fortis nec fœmina casta*."* A total corruption of morals prevailed in both sexes in every class of life, joined to stinginess of living, chiefly caused by oppressive taxation. All delicacy of manners, or sentiment of affection, was unknown. "The highest bidder was the buyer among the women."†

Frederick kept a watchful eye over his nephew and successor, but was unable to preserve him from the corruptions of the capital. His short reign, notorious for deceit, lies, and meanness, corresponded with Lord Malmesbury's description of him while crown prince. He is "large and ungainly in person, with a decided taste for low life, encouraging his companions to be uproarious and unbridled in their revels, laying aside all the respect due to him as future sovereign. His favourite mistress, formerly a stage dancer, presides at these orgies, and takes the lead in all the scenes of indecent mirth which pass there." Amidst this license strict etiquette was kept up, and Frederick, who was then making his court to Catherine, ordered a Prussian colonel to be caned, because he had taken the step of a Russian officer in entering an alehouse. Nor was higher matter of state policy neglected; the first territorial sections from the distracted kingdom of Poland being taken in 1773, and which flagrant spoliation and disturbance of the European balance elicited little more significant from Mr. Pitt than the remark that it was "a strange transaction."

Neutrality, indeed, was the wisest policy. What could England have done, in her distant isolation, against the vast military preponderance of the three partitioning powers,

* Diaries, vol. i. p. 97.

† Ibid.

Russia, Prussia, and Austria? Poland seemed ripe for dissolution, being apparently without any native elements of resistance or self-regeneration: her government was the most clumsy apparatus in Europe, disjointed by bitter aristocratic and religious feuds, with a cast-off favourite of the czarina for its nominal king. The masses could hardly lose by a change of masters, living in clay huts of one room, on a diet so mean that a tallow candle, if it could be stolen, was esteemed a luxury; while the chief produce of the kingdom was wasted in the feudal entertainments of a sottish nobility. One of the principal notables of the time was Prince Radzivil, who gave a masquerade, at which were drunk a thousand bottles of champagne. He kept open house every day to so many people that his twenty-five cooks could scarce supply them. In morals and manners the prince was little above his vassals; he affected the Polish habit and language, and was seldom sober. This may have been an exceptional case; certainly it was no justification of the royal partitioners, since every government has a right to its own form and instruments of rule, if they do not infringe coequal rights in neighbouring states; the last condition, however, was almost incompatible with the unceasing dissensions and external appeals for foreign intervention by Poland.

Lord Malmesbury became stationed at St. Petersburg in 1778, where a woman was sovereign, and among the most remarkable of her order. Catherine II. had de-throned her husband in self-defence, and usurped his place. As grand-duchess she had evinced superior abilities, cultivated her mind, and was distinguished for beauty and accomplishments. Both her talents and public spirit were displayed by an equitable code of laws she prepared for the future government of the empire. But her worth-

less husband, insensible to her deserts, attached himself to a low female; and, affecting to be jealous of the empress, projected her perpetual imprisonment, probably her death. Apprised of his iniquitous designs, Catherine anticipated their execution. Availing herself of her popularity and the services of a few devoted friends, Peter III. was seized, and, after a short imprisonment, destroyed,—one of the Orloffs, it has been related, performing the office of executioner, first by clandestinely administering a stupefying dose, and next, accelerating its operation by a vigorous manual grasp, the traces of which were visible on the neck of the wretched prince when his body was exposed to the gaze of the populace. Whether the empress was privy to his death is uncertain: assuredly it was not displeasing to her; for when the horrible tragedy was communicated, it made no abatement in her gaiety at table, and Alexis Orloff became the first favourite of the czarina.

The first seven years of Catherine's reign were the most dazzling in the imperial annals. She governed wisely, and with dignity. Firmness and regularity were enforced in the public departments, order and decorum in the palace. But the female sovereigns of Russia, however capable, have never been able to the close of their career to resist the seductions of love or tokay.

Catherine transcended her predecessors, both in political ability and the open dissoluteness of her life. The post of favourite was as free to competition as that of minister. Handsome men of little minds were most in request. No confusion of functions was allowed; the empress being too shrewd to allow the shallow minions of her pleasures to intermeddle with the higher duties of government. After her passion was satiated—a short time mostly sufficed—they were dismissed, generally with

an injunction to marry or travel, and loaded with magnificent gifts of lands, presents of jewellery, and pensions.

Lord Malmesbury says of the Court,—“The leading men here are too rich for corruption [a first impression, afterwards discovered to be unfounded], too headstrong to be persuaded, and too ignorant to listen to plain truths.” The two most influential personages at the time of his arrival were Prince Potemkin and Count Panin. The count was foreign minister, a man of little capacity, indolent, deceitful under a guise of frankness, and in the pay of Prussia. The prince had been a lover, but was then set aside; he still retained considerable influence over the empress, and directed her in the choice of his successors. He was a man of shining but superficial parts, like the Buckinghams of the Stuarts, sagacious and quick of discernment, full of wit, levity, and cleverness; but impulsive, and without steadiness of purpose. He lived without order; eating, drinking, and sleeping at any hour; and thought nothing of treating the British minister to an airing in the rain, or at midnight. Discontented, and satiated with voluptuousness, Potemkin often said he would withdraw to a cloister, resolved to lead a life of total abstinence. He was suddenly carried off by fever, which he vainly tried to master by force of an iron will and constitution;—appearing abroad half dressed, and eating raw turnips to allay the fires that consumed him.

It would be unreasonable to try the disorderlies of the continental courts by existing standards of morality. At the period under notice strumpetocracy was hardly discreditable, and every prince almost kept publicly and without shame his concubine. The czarina may have found some excuse in general usage, and thought she was only participating in the immunities of brother royals, and as they had their mistresses, she, as sovereign and co-

equal, had a right to her paramour. However this may be, in other respects the leading potentates of the time presented a great advance on their predecessors in freedom from bondage either to mistress, confessors, or physicians. The Empress Catherine, Frederick the Great, and Joseph II. of Germany, were all sovereigns of independent and extraordinary minds. They were all reformers, and gloried in adopting whatever social or political amendments the intelligence of the age might suggest. Under their auspices, and those of the men of letters whom they patronised, the character of European society was silently undergoing important changes, in the abatement of feudal superiorities, the suppression of monastic institutions, the abolition of torture, the promotion of religious toleration, and the introduction of a better system of laws and judicial administration. They would have gone farther, had not the ignorance of the masses, in concert with class interests, required for progress a more forcible intervention than the fiat of absolute sovereigns.

It may be here remarked, that the French literati seem to have incurred an undeserved share of blame for the extravagances of the Revolution. They did not originate, but only adopted, without due allowance for difference of circumstances, some of its misapplied principles. It was not in France, but in the declaration of independence of the North American States, that the rights of men were first proclaimed. But in the new region all was different, all in contrast with the condition of the feudal monarchies of Europe. The colonists had an unoccupied site to build upon ; they had not to destroy, only to create, or rather transplant, with few modifications, the laws and representative institutions with which they had become familiar from the mother country. As to equality, that was an im-

munity already possessed, and common to all ; they had been all born equal, had lived so, and no class demarcations existed to separate in civil rights Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams from the rest of their fellow citizens. This discrepancy between the meridian of Paris and Boston, the French illuminati appear to have overlooked or underrated : they comprehended and inculcated that which was abstractedly good and just ; but, inexperienced in actual government and public affairs, and under the centralised despotism of the Bourbons, no opportunity was afforded for Frenchmen to be otherwise — they did not adequately appreciate the difficulties in their practical realisation.

But the philosophers of the capital were not the earliest in the revolutionary movement of 1789. Among other problems, M. de Tocqueville, in his recent work*, has undertaken to answer the following, namely, "Why should this great Revolution, which was preparing at the same time over almost the whole continent of Europe, break out amongst us rather than elsewhere?" But, in fact, it can hardly be said to have begun with the French nation ; it began some years earlier with the Royals of the Continent, in the liberal and enlightened tendencies just noticed of the sovereigns of Germany. The entire programme of the revolution had been promulgated by Joseph II., emperor of Germany, and its practical development only arrested by the Magyars of Hungary and the privileged orders of the Netherlands. This patriotic and ardent prince did really establish, so far as imperial decrees could achieve it, all that the first National Assembly of France accomplished in its memorable sittings of '89. In 1781, the first year of his reign, he issued two edicts, one abolishing the German

* *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.* Paris, 1856.

censorship of the press, the other granting religious toleration to all dissentients from the Roman Catholic worship. Like the National Assembly, his aim was to do justice and fear not; to lessen the miseries of his people, by securing to them the fruits of their industry, by giving them equal laws, equal taxation, and emancipating them from the degradation of superstitious and feudal services. Like the Assembly, too, his errors were those of enthusiasm, and too much precipitancy in his innovations, without the gradual cooperation of the influential interests of the empire.* But we shall resume our exposition of the continental governments.

Closely connected with the state of the continental courts is that of diplomatic representatives, among whom a degree of corruption was rampant which is now only tolerated in the remote parts of Europe. Lord Malmesbury, as an able and vigilant minister, found it indispensable to negotiate in the general currency. Money formed the sinews of diplomacy; *non sine pulvere palma*. All were accessible in this shape, from the highest minister to the humble secretary, clerk, or messenger. The forms of suasion were usually gifts of jewellery, annual pensions, or pecuniary largesses, proportioned to the value of the intelligence betrayed or service rendered. The Dutch patriots his lordship found open to good dinners as well as lucre. In his despatches home he apologises to our foreign secretary † for the lavishness of his gifts, on the score that he is outdone by the French, Dutch, and Prussian ambassadors. The czarina

* Dr. Vehse's work comprises a lucid outline of this emperor's career, as well as interesting details of the "Court, Aristocracy, and Diplomacy of Austria."

† Letter to Lord Stormont, dated Petersburg, December 24. 1780. Again, March 22. 1781.

even had her price, but it was a lure to her ambition, which, like another passion, was insatiable. Embarrassed by the armed neutrality, and desirous of terminating the hopeless struggle with the American colonies, England sought her mediation. The empress was reluctant to interfere, alleging that Russia had no interest in the matter ; it might involve her in war ; and strongly urged the policy of peace on our ministry. A more tempting bait was tried ; it was the private offer to cede Minorca to Russia after peace was concluded. This succeeded ; it favoured the designs of the empress on Turkey, and she at once agreed to be mediatrix, in concert with the Court of Vienna. But how could she be impartial in her arbitration ? Minorca was the price of her intervention, of her award. It was the same as a judge, before decision, receiving the promise of a bribe from one of the litigants.

Informers and spies of every grade were in the constant pay of the diplomatists ; nor did governments show any respect to the sanctity of private correspondence. Letters were intercepted and opened without scruple. No communication was safe by the ordinary post. Knowing the general perfidy, ambassadors acted accordingly, and wrote fictitious or misleading despatches, which they knew would be stopped, opened, and read by their opponents. Malmesbury played off a trick of this kind on Frederick II. He wished to write to the English minister at Berlin. Baron Goertz, the Prussian minister, offered to enclose his letter in his bag ; but his lordship anticipated it would be opened at the Berlin post-office, and provided for it by a fulsome eulogy on the philosopher-king. Frederick, who was intimately conversant with the vile practices of his age, had good reason for saying that diplomacy was only the art of deceit. It is men-

songe, and mainly consists in artfully concealing our designs, traversing those of our opponents, and converting the results of our insidiousness to our own benefit.

England played her part in this game, and of which examples have been given.* But a wiser system has doubtless intervened than that which has been glanced at, both in respect of foreign policy and European society. Royal palaces are not such houses of ill-fame as they were; nor are the upper circles so debased by ignorance, vice, and superstition. If their past histories excite disgust, it is not unmixed with pity for the miserable effects of their unfavourable position in infancy and adult life. The late Viscount Chateaubriand was reared in all the pride and prejudice of the French noblesse; and what a picture his "*Autobiography*" has left of his youthful days! In the usages of the ancestral château of Combourg existed all that could embitter the present and render cheerless the future. Silence, gloom, and isolation reigned. The gaiety and freedom, so congenial to the young, were stifled by cumberous forms and rigid etiquette. The parental despotism transmitted from ancient Rome, and rigorously upheld through the Gothic ages, survived far into the eighteenth century. Filial obedience was not based on kindness, but fear. Upon this the old count governed his household. He was sole monarch, and admitted no partner near his throne. In winter, much of his domain was under water, and untraversable save by water-fowl. Within doors a dead stillness prevailed: the count sought to while away the long evenings wrapped in a large white cloak, with high peaked cap, by a lonely round at one end of the vast hall, the family circle being gathered at the

* *Antè*, p. 478—480.

other, whence, from the light of a single taper, they had occasional glimpses of their dread lord in his reappearances from the dark apogee of his orbit. It was a relief to all parties when the turret clock struck ten: precisely at that hour the count sought to lose a consciousness of existence in his dormer tower; while young Chateaubriand, his sisters, and mother obtained the liberty of speech. It was a brief interlude, and the nights were made terrible to them by goblin stories of bandits and ghosts. The Chateaubriands for generations had only been a succession of hare-hunters, duellists, and litigants; so that the resources of literature and philosophy had received little of their patronage.

“ Pain is cruel to us,” says Leopardi; “but tedium, weariness, and disgust are worse.” These formed the dire plagues of the Great Houses in the ante-revolutionary *âge*. Political life, commerce, the discoveries of natural science, and the recreations of literature and the fine arts, had only in a limited degree opened to them their diversified fields of edification and delight. War, travel, and rural sports are only imperfect substitutes for these; they are not so reliable at all times and in all seasons; and *ennui* creeps in in their unavoidable vacations. And what is more intolerable and deteriorative than the stagnation of the soul, resulting from the vacant heart or unoccupied mind? To be conscious that we live, we must think or feel; and the Archduchess of Austria mentioned by Swinburne* was not wholly without reason when she rejoiced at a cancer in the cheek, because it gave her a sensation of life, and diversified the monotonous routine of her days.

About this period, in 1772, the Austrian capital was

* Courts of Europe at the Close of last Century, vol. i. p. 342.

visited by Dr. Burney in his “Musical Tour.” He was desirous of visiting the great composer, Metastasio, whom he found living four stories high, it being the prerogative of the emperor to appropriate the first floor of every house in Vienna to the officers of the court and the army, six or eight privileged places excepted.

The inner life of the German courts has been fully portrayed in the “Memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith,” the eldest sister of Frederick the Great. It is painful to read them, as it sometimes is the records of oppression and depravity in the London police reports. It is not that the details of low, or rather humble life, are necessarily repellent; they are sometimes deeply engaging, like the story of Robinson Crusoe; but it is when great vices are associated with the means of indulgence that they become hideous. This is not unfrequently the case in the British metropolis. Men are often criminal not from want or necessity, but from moral inability to resist the guilty seductions within reach in a luxurious capital. Similar to this relation was the condition of many of the despotic courts of the Continent. There were great temptations, and an irresponsible power of gratification; and hence the Royals of Berlin, Hanover, and Bareith, gave full license to their animal passions, and lived with their wives and families much after the English fashion of vagrants and navvies, or dissolute London mechanics. They were not, in the estimate of the margravine, bad fellows some of them; but their tempers were so unruly, especially if overtaken by wine or the effects of it; and this unhappily was not a rare, but almost diurnal occurrence. Intemperance is the chief fount of crime in England, and the same fatal passion was doubtless the principal origin of the criminal excesses of the German princes. The example of the monarch was of course

followed by those in subordinate stations ; and of one the margravine appears to have been the victim. Her gouvernante, Miss Letti, like the second king of Prussia, was installed in the full exercise of despotic power ; like him too she had her lover, and was subject to violent outbreaks of rage, in the whirlwind of which her pupil was wont to feel the weight of her fists or of a candlestick, be dragged by the hair, and kicked on the floor, and once was unceremoniously pitched to the bottom of the stairs, to the greater jeopardy of life or limb. Such details cannot be otherwise than offensive * ; and I will only add that a little teetotalism, or at least more ebriety, would have wrought a great reform in the manners of the German courts in the eighteenth century. But intemperance was an European vice ; it was common among the higher classes throughout the Continent, from the banks of the Nevá to the Seine ; nor unfortunately could the banks of the Thames be held exceptionable. Our eminent public characters—those whom it is usual to look up to with honour and worship, as the leaders and lights of their age—were all addicted to intoxication. George IV., the second William Pitt, Charles James Fox, and Sheridan, were all inveterate topers, and died prematurely from excess in alcoholic indulgences. Edmund Burke was culpable in a less degree, but he occasionally mixed in the revelries of Carlton House, and contributed convivial toasts.

The sequel to this condition of European society was as natural as the subversion of the Roman empire by the barbarians, or the onslaught on the dissolute priesthood of Rome by the religious reformers of the sixteenth century. The French revolution was the avenging arm

* For some descriptive scenes from the " Memoirs " of the Margravine, see *antè*, p. 384.

that vice and imbecility evoked, and the enthusiastic masses of France, which an unmitigable conscription called into existence, commanded mostly by leaders whose energies and abilities had alone raised them from the ranks, humbled in rapid succession the courts of the Continent. Poor, impotent, and base was the resistance they offered to their republican assailants. Prussia was the earliest power to secede from the coalition, but previously made prize of the English subsidy to share in the spoils of Poland. Austria had also begun to treat with the Terrorists of Paris, and would have anticipated Prussia by concluding a separate treaty of peace, had not the negotiation been frustrated by the sudden downfall of Robespierre.* The petty states of Italy were next overrun, and the ignominious peace of Campo Formio effected the first humiliation of the house of Habsburg. Austria, by a fresh coalition, sought to recover her lost territories; but nothing could stand against the fortunes of Napoleon. Meanwhile Prussia, blind to her own danger, continued an inert spectator of the successive discomfitures of her neighbour, and tamely waited her own doom in a stupor of pride based on the triumphs of the Great Frederick. Her fate was sealed at Jena, after which overwhelming overthrow the entire kingdom became a prey to the invader. Austria beheld as supinely the fate of Prussia, as Prussia had beheld the disasters of Austria at Ulm, Austerlitz, and Wagram†; and the disgrace of both was consummated by being yoked to the car of the conqueror, and compelled to join in an attack on the

* Memoirs of the Court, Aristocracy, and Diplomacy of Austria, vol. ii. p. 392.

† A few Prussian squadrons at Wagram might have changed the fortune of the war (*Colonel Mitchell's Life of Wallenstein*, p. 188.), and saved Austria from a nuptial alliance with the French emperor.

only empire from which either could hope for assistance or independence. Out of all this aggregation of calamities and blunders some good issued. The nobility of Prussia, to whose misconduct may be chiefly attributed the loss of the battle of Jena and the reverses of Austria, and who were alone eligible to be landowners, were subsequently and deservedly deprived of that exclusive privilege, and a share in the property of the soil was conceded to its cultivators. The misfortunes of the Spanish peninsula, which English valour and the genius of Wellington redeemed, may be traced in like manner as much to the degeneracy of the nobility of Spain as to that of its Bourbon princes: —

“ Here all were noble, save Nobility ;
None hugged the conqueror’s chain, save fallen Chivalry.”

III. ADVANCES FROM THE REVOLUTION.

The preceding characteristics of Royal Courts and general society, have not been grouped for the disparagement of a later age, but its commendation. They are past scenes almost without surviving resemblances, and have passed away with the divine right and impeccability of kings. Probably not a prince in Europe could now be justly considered an imbecile libertine, or brutal in conduct, unless it be the misguided Bourbon of Naples. Not only have sovereigns in abilities and private manners become more exemplary, but their government more liberal. For an illustration of the last, it is only necessary to advert to the settlement of Europe by the Allied Sovereigns, after the overthrow of Napoleon. It was an example of moderation and wisdom without parallel in Greek or Roman fame. Conquerors though they were, and masters of the capital of France, they deprived her of nothing she deserved to possess, but simply demanded the dethrone-

ment of the man whose vaunting ambition had plunged the country into its humiliating abyss. There was no attempt at conquest or dictatorial interference with the affairs of the French people. The Bourbons as a matter of course, and as the shortest way to a general peace, were restored. The territorial limits conceded to France were extended beyond what she possessed in January 1792.* Austria, Prussia, and Holland, were the chief gainers: these states were reestablished in their former greatness; but England and Russia, whose persevering and united exertions had principally contributed to the successful issue, reaped no advantage, save the glory of the deliverance of Europe from military domination. Even the great aggressor himself was magnanimously treated. Russia, in particular, was eminently generous towards him, apparently cherishing friendly reminiscences of her discomfited foe.† In an age less civilised, Napoleon might have been put to death, made a show of, or imprisoned for life; instead, he was suffered to retain the title of emperor, to select the place of his retirement, in the island of Elba, which was given to him in full sovereignty, and a princely revenue settled upon him and the members of his family. This proved a fleeting arrangement: before the year had expired, Bonaparte reappeared on the soil of France, and was welcomed back with transport by the multitude and the military, who escorted him in triumph to the Tuileries. The enterprise proved more daring than discreet or well timed; for the allied congress was still in session, occupied in completing the settlement of Europe. Not a moment's hesitation was felt about the course to be pursued. The violator of the

* Treaty of Paris, May 30. 1814.

† It was George IV., not Alexander, that first proposed the deposing of Bonaparte. (*Westminster Review*, Jan. 1855.)

late compact was declared an outlaw; and England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, bound themselves to raise 150,000 men each, and never lay down their arms till the treaty of Paris had been reestablished, the intruder ejected, and placed in a condition never again to disturb the repose of the world. The struggle was brief, but ardent. It lay between the French army and the European nations, and was terminated by the battle of Waterloo, justly termed glorious, because bravely and skilfully won, and securing victory's noblest trophy, in a lasting peace. Another treaty of Paris ensued *, but different in its terms from the first. Made wise by experience, material guarantees were secured for the observance of its conditions. New boundaries were fixed for France, her interior was made more open to the allies, a heavy contribution was fixed to indemnify them for the expenses of the war; and better to preserve France under surveillance, seventeen fortified places were to be delivered up to the victors, to be held in trust by them with an army of 150,000 men for five years. England went beyond her confederates in generosity; she surrendered her French indemnity of five millions, to the king of the Netherlands, to restore the barrier of fortresses against France, which the emperor of Germany, Joseph II., had, in an exuberant impulse of magnanimity, demolished.

Such were the fruits of the hundred days' reign of Napoleon, and the terms on which France was permitted to retain her nationality. In this final arrangement no lust of dominion was evinced by the allies, after the ancient Roman or Grecian fashion, or the modern times of Louis XIV. They battled not for conquest, the vanity and cost of which had been proved by the illusive career of

* Second Treaty of Paris, Nov. 20. 1815.

Bonaparte, but for the world's peace. It inaugurated a remarkable novelty in the relations of two of the great western states. Since modern history began, eighty years out of every hundred have been years of war between France and England ; but in the long term from 1816, peaceful relations have never been interrupted. The wars which had previously divided them, mostly originated in unworthy jealousies, in trivial or imaginary wrongs, and could not possibly yield to either any great resulting benefit. A country less advanced may be benefited by subjugation, in sharing the advantages of a superior civilisation ; but no such discrepancy has ever subsisted between France and England : they have always stood nearly at the same limit of progress ; and had conquest by either party been possible, it could not, by their consolidation under one law and government, have been productive of any material advantages which each apart did not previously possess. Consequently, their unceasing wars may, without rashness, be considered as gigantic errors of international policy, obstructive to their common progress by dissipating, in profitless conflicts, the fruits of superior industry and intelligence. It is, however, a lamentable fact, that nations appear fated to be always under the influence of some delusive excitement or occupation. The Egyptians erected pyramids ; France and England have exhausted and occupied themselves in mutual destruction. Which *egaremen* offers the most astounding instance of human platitude, must be left to a future age to determine.

It has been said of Brennus, that where the hoof of his horse had trod the grass never grew. The revolutionary wars, however, had some countervailing fruits, and were not so fatally destructive a scourge as the hordes of the Gaulish barbarian. The famous tricolour made the tour

of Europe, and its march was not barren in results. Napoleon trampled under foot the political liberties of the French, but respected civil rights which did not clash with his own absolutism, and was sensible of the benefits effected by the revolution in liberating the industry and material resources of France. Her example in this direction of improvement he was not loth that the other nations which he overran should follow. In every state he mastered, he at once abolished the bondage of serfs, the exclusive privileges of the nobility and of churchmen. This was done in Italy, in the duchy of Warsaw, in Westphalia ; and had his rule been prolonged, he would have rescued the entire Peninsula from secular and spiritual degradation.*

Among other nations his armies carried with them the ideas and customs of the more advanced civilisation of France. European societies were shaken on their old foundations ; nations were mingled by frequent intercourse ; bridges were thrown across boundary rivers ; high roads made over the Alps, Apennines, and Pyrenees, and these giant openings effected for the physical improvement of states what the convulsions of the revolution had done for human intellect. The Berlin

* Upon entering Madrid Napoleon presented himself to the inhabitants as their liberator. "I have abolished," said he, "the tribunal of the Inquisition, against which the age protested. Priests should inform the conscience, but not exercise civil jurisdiction over citizens. I have suppressed feudal rights, and every one may set up inns, mills, fisheries, bakehouses, and give free scope to his industry. The selfishness, wealth, and ignorance of a few did more injury to your agriculture than the heats of extreme summer. All private tribunals were usurpations, opposed to justice and the rights of the nation. I have suppressed them." (*Speech, December, 1808.*) These boons to the Spaniards were long deferred ; the two parties of the nobles and the monks uniting against them.

and Milan decrees completed the impulse of conquest ; it improved, according to M. Mignet, continental industry, enabling it to take root and to replace English manufactures and colonial produce. Thus by agitating peoples, the great soldier contributed to their civilisation. His despotism rendered him counter-revolutionary in France ; but his spirit of conquest made him regenerative for Europe.

In all its phases, in all the changes it has wrought in institutions, classes, and sentiments, the Revolution has been as influential as the Protestant reformation. Both have carried forward European society. England profited the most of any nation by one, and the least by the other. But her political progress had been made, and her task was to preserve rather than imitate French example. The great question the revolution opened was between absolute and representative government ; and England, a century earlier, had made an irreversible decision. In France, the political part of the problem still appears undetermined, but her entire failure would not be conclusive ; it would not neutralise the counter successes, initiated or complete, of the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic nations in Belgium and Holland, Prussia, Bavaria, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, and in the length and breadth of the American world.

In the German states it is only appearances that are adverse to progress, not the pervading sentiment and capabilities of their numerous and intelligent population. The public is apt to overlook or undervalue important changes silently or without violence effected. The executive ministry of Prussia in 1807 quietly accomplished as great a revolution in landed property as the National Assembly of France in 1789. Plebeians were made eligible to the ownership of lands ; the old feudal nobility

were deprived of one half or one third of their estates by the conversion of tenures, and lost their exclusive right to military promotion. Unlike the Gallic explosions, these vital innovations were effected without exciting alarm, almost without the notice of neighbouring powers. Prussia found, after the overwhelming defeat at Jena, the incompetence of her worn-out aristocracy, as Austria, Italy, Spain, and Portugal had done in contests with the new men, new principles, and new interests of the age. At Jena, not a single officer in the Prussian army was without the prefix "von" to his name, nor without a crest to his seal. All children alike succeeded to the title of the parent. If an earl had twelve children there were twelve earls or countesses. This idle vanity, poltroonery, and incapacity, was kept up by brevets in the army and offices in the state. Afterwards honours were thrown open to commoners, and trade to the nobility.

France, herself, though experimenting towards them, has hardly yet compassed the essential elements of a happy futurity. Her revolution originated in political irresponsibilities and civil inequalities. There was no harmony of parts in her social edifice. A supreme despotism sunk in vice and incapacity, a libertine nobility, immoral church, incongruous judicial magistracy; and none of these great orders held in check by any intermediary balance of power, in legislation, religion, commerce, or industry. All in contrast to ourselves, among whom the prerogatives of the crown are strictly defined; an aristocracy in superb grandeur, but not stalled off in privilege and exclusiveness, but mingling in fair rivalry of statesmanship and private worth with the rest of society; and a representative commons, that substantively embodies and reflects the entire interests, intelligence, religious and moral sentiment of the nation. To these con-

servative elements may be added the advantages of our more practical aptitudes, derived from lengthened experience, and the priceless treasure of examples which the Long Parliament, Cromwell, Monk, and the Restoration have transmitted for our guidance and caution. Protracted as the civil struggles of France appear to contemporaries, they have not endured so long as the past ones of England ; and if she continue in the throes of revolution, it may be ascribed to the greater obstructions alluded to which confronted her at the outset, with probably some specialities in the impulsive character of her population, want of political tact or patriotic integrity in her leading men, the predominant rural occupation of her people, and their abject popish idolatry.

The cause itself, however, remains intact and unimpeachable. That irresponsible government is sheer brutalising tyranny, remains the abiding faith ; and though the mistakes of our neighbours or their rude embraces may have despoiled Liberty of some of her attractions, she still continues a goddess heavenly bright, worshipped, it may be, with less ardour, but more constant affection, than by a past generation :—

“ No wonder, then, if our poetic sires
Felt for her youthful bloom more genuine fires ;
Nature to them her virgin smiles displayed,
They wooed a spotless, we a ruined maid.”

Prologue to Fashionable Friends.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DEATH OF GEORGE III.

His Character and Government. — A Progressive Reign.

THE king lived through the revolutionary war, but was unconscious of its triumphant conclusion. He was afflicted with a mental disorder, which first visited him in 1765; it originated a regency bill, upon which much debate ensued in both Houses, on the question whether the princess-mother should form part of the regency, or was included in the term royal family; but the bill was abandoned. At intervals the king continued to be visited by the same malady, and during the nine years preceding his death had not experienced a lucid interval; the regal office being vested by parliament in the heir apparent, at first with limited powers, and afterwards in full sovereignty. If the king, from incapacity, did not share in the general exultation at the return of peace, he was a stranger to the heavy calamities the war bequeathed, and which for seven years after deeply afflicted and agitated the realm.

George III. died January 29. 1820. In the relations of private life, and in capacity for government, he was superior to his two immediate predecessors. Exemplary in conjugal duties, religious, moral, and temperate, his conduct accorded with the national standard of propriety and decorum. His memory was retentive; his judgment shrewd and circumspect; his demeanour in pressing

emergencies firm and fearless. He was consistent and conscientious; not knowingly a wrong-doer. In conversation he was easy and familiar, but inquisitive and repetitionary. He possessed no remarkable talent nor educational acquirement. For science and literature he had little taste; and the occupation of his leisure consisted in the chase, agriculture, mechanics, music, the theatres, and rustic festivals.

Although the king was by birth an Englishman, the predilection of the Hanoverian elector had not become extinct. That the Brunswick family continued German is shown by the education given to the princes. Of the king's seven sons five were educated in Germany, and with the exception of the Duke of Sussex, whose health rendered such education impracticable, were all educated as the younger sons of German princes; that is, as German military. The narrow mind of the king may be attributed to his limited early training, cooperating with his indolent and incurious disposition. It is a remarkable fact in the history of a prince destined to the government of a great maritime empire, that at the age of thirty-four, long after he had ascended the throne, George III. had never seen the sea which environs his insular dominion, or been thirty miles from London.* Such a secluded existence seems more suited to the life of an eastern monarch or grand lama than the constitutional head of a European community.

The efforts made by the king at the beginning of his reign, and not relinquished during the course of it, to relieve the crown from the pressure of the aristocracy were excusable, from the perplexing difficulties his German predecessors had experienced in the formation

* Walpole's Memoirs of George III., vol. iv. p. 327.

of ministries; but they tended to vest the government in the hands of a meaner agency than that of the heads of the great houses. In the construction of both Whigs and leading Tories it was the prerogative of the king to reign, not to govern. According to Lord North, “the king ought to be treated with all sort of respect and attention, but the appearance of power is all that a king of this country can have.”* George III., however, sought to be something more than a name or popular show; and his struggles had the effect of rendering ministerial power less an object of the ambition of the grandees of party, causing it to be more exercised by the needy cadets of noble families, or legal adventurers whose politics were secondary to professional interests or prejudices. Hence the ascendancy of a succession of Tory lawyers,—of Mansfield, Thurlow, Kenyon, Loughborough, Eldon, and Perceval, to whose influence much of the arbitrariness of the court and its protracted bigotry may be attributed. The early part of the reign was the least exceptionable. The conclusion of peace in 1763, amidst brilliant triumphs, was magnanimous. There was, however, little dignity in the contest with Wilkes—it made his importance; nor in the exasperation manifested about the political trifles which elicited the ire of Junius. The independence of the American colonies was one of those junctures in the history of nations that a government can neither avoid, nor, as the interest and honour of mother-countries were then understood, be quietly submitted to. Contrary to anticipation the issue was favourable to both parent and offspring, and the loss of empire in the West replaced by splendid acquisitions in the East. In the French revolutionary war the king was a leading

* *Memorials and Correspondence of Mr. Fox, vol. ii. p. 37.*

alarmist, and put Mr. Burke's "Reflections" into the hands of all his courtiers; observing that if a stop was not put to republicanism there would be an end of his order.* In his fears he had the support of the rich and titled, whose wishes are equivalent to laws, and cannot be disregarded. But he was more pertinacious in the continuance of hostilities both with America and France than the most bellicose of his subjects. George III., indeed, lacked the most shining part of a Christian in not being a lover of peace, but prone to war; embodying the mediæval ideal of a champion rather than of a patriot monarch worthy of his age. The chief virtues of the king, indeed, were domestic; his vices those that distress nations.

In the internal government of the kingdom there is little scope for eulogy. The ascendancy of Toryism, consequent on the revolting coalition of North and Fox, was interrupted only by fitful interludes of Whiggism. Important guarantees of constitutional liberty were infringed or suspended. The growth of public opinion, and the increase of wealth and intelligence among the people, formed the chief bulwarks against the increasing influence of the crown from the augmentation of the peerage and government expenditure. The right of reporting the parliamentary debates, and the independent publicity of the journals, which were fully established, imposed an indirect responsibility to the community on the Legislature, the force of which was augmented by the frequency of county and other public meetings, aided by numerous societies established for political reform and the diffusion of political information. The external pressure from these influences, concurring with critical emergen-

* Recollections of the Reign of George III., p. 400.; by Mr. Nicholls, a contemporary observer and M.P.

cies in the wars, was felt and evinced in the character of public measures. Ireland was sought to be conciliated by the mitigation of the penal laws against Catholics, the opening of her trade with this country and the Continent, and her legislative union with England. The rivalries of factions and their endless parliamentary divisions, which had obstructed and sometimes suspended executive government, fell into disrepute. Questions bearing more directly on the commonweal—the freedom and advancement of commerce,—fiscal and judicial improvements,—mitigation of the criminal law,—popular education and police,—the growth of indigence and population,—mercantile vicissitudes and currency derangements—obtained a larger share of public attention.

The age was intellectual; but George III. did not actively interest himself in its triumphs further than by the patronage of the elementary teachers of education, of the fine arts, and voyages of geographical discovery. Since the days of Cardinal Wolsey, England has not had a prominent *Mæcenas* among her kings or ministers. Even the national universities, and the public and grammar schools of the kingdom, continued fettered by usage, by devotion to an exploded philosophy, or by the tenure of their foundations, and did not essentially accelerate the advancement of science. With little aid, however, from these sources, knowledge of a valuable kind made an extraordinary progress, stimulated by the wants, or fostered by the increasing riches of the people. The subtleties of metaphysics, whose confines lead nowhere; the niceties of classical scholarship, which savour of pedantry; the higher orders of mathematics, whose uses and reasonings are inapplicable to common life, were less successfully cultivated, and yielded in public estimation to the more novel and available pursuits of political

economy, chemistry, mechanics, geology, the medical art, history, natural and experimental philosophy. Literature and poetry, as already described, acquired great renown ; but the leading characteristic of the age was Utility, less morally than physically, in the application of the intellect to the substantial requisites of commerce, agriculture, and the manufacturing arts.

It was an age of Humanity ; of which the abolition of the African slave-trade, and the efforts made to induce other nations to follow the example, is a noble testimony. The tendency of the national feeling was evinced in the encouragement given to the Bell and Lancaster schemes of instruction ; to institutions of charity and benevolence ; to efforts to mitigate or extinguish loathsome or infectious maladies ; and to better the state of the poor by an indulgent, if not always an enlightened, philosophy. The infamous and often cruel and unequal punishment of the pillory was abolished ; also the barbarous one of burning females for petty treason, and the disembowelling of traitors. Corruption of blood in the descendants of criminals was limited, and the Gothic jurisprudence of wagers of battle abolished.

Unquestionably it was an age of great progress, though the long reign of sixty years was unmarked by the consummation of any great social or political reform. It was eminently a stirring period, and instructive from the variety and vast interests of its occurrences. It was distinguished by the spread of intelligence, increase of national riches, extraordinary scientific discoveries, great canal and road improvements, and brilliant naval and military triumphs. On the bright side of the monarch's character may be urged his private worth, piety, humanity, and love of justice ; on the dark, his selfishness, bigotry, obstinacy, dissimulation, vindictiveness, and ingratitude.

His understanding and regal abilities have been underrated. It is sufficient to say that he abased the factions, and thoroughly understood his own interests. To his successor he left a splendid inheritance,—a crown in more complete sovereignty, more independent of aristocratic dictation, disputed title, favouritism, or other control, than it had been held since the times of the Tudors.*

CHAPTER XXX.

REGENCY AND REIGN OF GEORGE IV.

War as the Pacifier of Nations.—Transition from War to Peace; its Effects on England and the Continent.—Resistance to Retrenchment.—Political Discontents; their Causes and Character.—Trial of Queen Caroline.—Continental Revolutions; the Holy Alliance; the British Ministry dissentient.—Commencement of Liberalism; short Ministry of Mr. Canning.—State of Ireland.—Ministry of the Duke of Wellington; its Energetic and Conciliatory Progress. Relief of the Dissenters, and Repeal of Catholic Disabilities.—Death of the King, and Characteristics of his Reign.—Architectural and Street Improvements.—Public Reforms in Weights and Measures, the Coinage, Currency, and Police.—Literature, Poetry, and Novels.—The Quarterly Reviews.—Music, Painting, and the Lyrical Drama.

It is unfortunate for mankind that, while a peaceful era is most conducive to the public welfare, it is frequently the least so to the ease and renown of the supreme power. The glories of war chiefly concentrate in the sovereign,

* Concluding paragraphs, with slight alterations, from the author's "British History." Bohn. Fifth edition, 1847.

his ministers, and great officers ; while the blessings of peace are more widely diffused and shared in by the entire community. The calamities of modern wars are not limited to the period of hostilities ; but, like hereditary diseases, transmitted to an immediately succeeding or more distant generation. They are chiefly waged on credit, and contrition for their miseries, and the redemption of their squanderings, bequeathed to a guiltless posterity. They are the spendthrift's riot, who wastes the estate in which he has only a life tenure, leaving the paternal inheritance dilapidated and encumbered to his heirs. Wars have thus become a joyous and gratuitous entertainment to governments mindful only of themselves ; and if the profligate gratification is not more frequently indulged in, it may be ascribed to the more beneficent enlightenment of nations and rulers, and a deeper sense of the illusive and blood-stained triumphs of the most dazzling victories.

There is irksomeness in all transitions, even from bad to good. A nation long devoted to peaceful occupations does not easily assume a belligerent attitude. Her first efforts are feeble, ill-directed, abortive ; and most wars begin by disaster. As hostilities continue, greater competence and aptitude are acquired, and the war fever rises. A wider circle of the national sympathies is enlisted in the quarrel ; miscarriages have begot shame and indignation ; armaments are made more powerful, their purpose more cautiously planned, and their execution more skilfully and energetically managed. But as the avowed end of all wars is peace,—a safe and honourable peace, of course,—this tends to drive to a greater distance, or entirely prostrates, their legitimate end. The heavier, more deadly, and long continued the blows inflicted by both sides, the greater become the mutual hatred and

exasperation; so that, in lieu of alleviating the wrongs in which war first originated, it aggravates them. Nations become more hostile and distant in their relations, instead of being drawn into closer bonds of amity. Hence the futility of wars as a means of peace; they do not reconcile or remove injuries; and thus hostilities mostly terminate not from more friendly feelings or less aversion, but the want or probable want of the means to prosecute them.

The growth of a powerful monetary class in the principal European states has afforded ready means of meeting the current expenses of wars by anticipating future resources. In a prompt command of this auxiliary agency England is more affluent than any nation; and it was by the means of it she was enabled successfully to close the great revolutionary struggle. It was not until the storm had subsided, that she became fully sensible of the wounds she had received and the responsibilities she had incurred. While hostilities continued she felt neither weakness nor disorder. Although a principal in the contest, she had been exempt from its worst calamities. Battles were fought, countries overrun and desolated, but her own border remained unscathed. Up to the period of our intervention in Peninsular affairs, we carried on the war mostly by deputy; and the immense subsidies by which we hired in succession every continental gladiator, did not impose a proportionate and immediate sacrifice. Posterity was left to settle the account, while George III. and his contemporaries enjoyed the antecedent royal pastime.

During the war the country was in the state deemed the most cheerful; namely, the progressive; not the stationary which is dull, nor the retrograde which is melancholy. Employment was abundant both for capital and industry. All incomes, except those fixed by law or private settlements, were increasing, and everyone seemed

to be growing rich. Profits and wages, rent, tithes, and salaries, were all on the advance. Much of this prosperity was doubtless fallacious, arising from the expenditure of borrowed money by government, and the depreciation of the currency; but it was not less stimulative than real in producing general intoxication. Owing to these causes incomes increased faster than wealth, generating expensive habits among all classes, which were reluctantly abandoned on the return of peace. It must not, however, be inferred that capital did not increase as well as incomes pending the war; it certainly did to a great amount. Our unrivalled industry and mechanical inventions were more than a match both for the prodigality of the people and their rulers; and the capital of the country increased enormously, though not so fast nor on so solid a foundation as in the peaceful reign of George IV.

The final close of hostilities after the victory of Waterloo was like the cessation of motion in a gigantic machine which has been urged to its maximum velocity. One of the first results of peace was an enormous diminution in the war expenditure of the government. During the last five years of the war the public expenditure averaged 108,720,000*l.*; during the first five years of peace it averaged 64,660,000*l.** Peace thus caused an immediate reduction in the demand for home products to the amount of nearly fifty millions. In no former contest had our military force been so great; the number of sailors and soldiers discharged after the peace amounted to a quarter of a million, of whom some returned to productive labour, while a great number of manufacturers ceased to receive employment in contracts for clothing,

* Lowe's *Present State of England*.

arms, and other military stores. In rural industry the revulsion was as great as in manufacturing and mercantile pursuits. The seduction of war prices had begotten a spirit of speculation in agriculture. Land forced into culture had to be abandoned because the value of its produce ceased to be remunerative in a contracted currency. Similar causes, though, from its less artificial distension, in a more limited degree, were in operation on the Continent. Nearly the whole of Europe had been in military array, and every country felt the sudden reaction from the disembodying of armies, cessation of government purchases, and the universal permutation in enterprise, trade, and occupations.

In England the difficulties of the first years of peace were augmented by unfavourable harvests. That of 1815 was rather above the average; but in 1816 there was a great and general deficiency. In 1817 and 1818 the crops did not exceed an average. During these two years the average price of wheat was 89s. a quarter. The miseries resulting from high prices, combined with reduced wages and profits, were innumerable, and the prescriptions for their alleviation hardly less multifarious. The merchants, bankers, and capitalists met in the city of London, to devise remedies; legislators and politicians in Westminster; and the multitude in Spa Fields. By some, public disasters were ascribed to the transition from war to peace; others, more definite in their designation, traced them to excess of consumption or production, or change in the standard of value, by which pecuniary contracts were deranged. Meanwhile, as some will doubtless remember, the country for the first seven years after the peace was constantly on the verge of rebellion. The prisons were filled with political agitators, the victims of impracticable theories, of suspicion and government

espionage. Severe laws were passed to punish sedition and coerce the Radical Reformers as they were called ; and on one melancholy occasion in 1819 a vast multitude, assembled at Manchester to petition, were subjected to military execution. Society, in short, was wholly disorganised; every useful or rational pursuit in industry and science was neglected or suspended ; and England became little better than a vast asylum occupied by two descriptions of inmates — the delirious and their keepers ; the former often impatient, irritable, and unreasonable ; the latter, with less excuse for error, rash, needlessly violent, and coercive.

Unhappily at this trying period the government was directed by men unswayed by high principles, of secondary abilities, and meanly subservient to the Prince Regent. Popular demands were met with haughtiness or insult. Coercion in lieu of conciliation was determined upon : the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, suspected persons imprisoned, the press silenced by persecutions ; victims were sought to be obtained by stretching the treason laws ; and the metropolis and the provinces overrun with government spies who acted a diabolical part.

Elated by the triumph over Napoleon, a course of foreign policy was pursued adverse to the recovery of the country, and which required the maintenance of a large peace establishment. A standing force of 176,000 men was demanded in 1816, when there did not exist the remotest danger from any external enemy. In the speech of the regent the “ security of the country ” was not indeed the only reason assigned for this large army. There was not violated treaties, the balance of power, nor the interests of the Hanover electorate to plead, so a new pretext was discovered. Not satisfied with maritime supremacy, the cost of peace armaments was doubled by

aspiring to territorial dominion. The aim seemed to be to make a Germanised military figure abroad—to become both Carthage and Rome—a paramount continental as well as naval power; and the thirst of universal empire which had been imputed to the dethroned French emperor was imbibed, in subserviency to an ostentatious sovereign, by the ministry of Lord Liverpool.

Though the policy of government, foreign and domestic, was unpopular, the public effervescence subsided by the revival of trade. In England the yoke-fellows in political agitation are mostly commercial difficulties and scarcity of employment. In times of prosperity the productive classes take little interest in state affairs; their differences are among themselves. Encouraged by the demand for labour, workmen seek, by combination against their employers, to extort higher wages. The struggle continues till high prices and overstocked markets produce a mercantile reaction; then workmen are discharged, wages lowered, and masters recover their ascendancy. It is under this common depression that both parties begin to listen to representations of public grievances. Democratic writings increase in circulation; abstract theories of society and government are propounded; and the equal rights of all to share in political advantages is boldly asserted and readily believed. The popular demands increase with the increase of excitement, until capitalists become alarmed at the subversive aspect of republican pretensions; they separate themselves from so menacing an agitation, having no wish to second claims adverse to themselves. Thus a severance ensues, and aristocratic politicians of all parties suspend the agitation of mutual differences, to resist the common enemy of their immunities.

In 1816—17, and again in 1819—20, the masses, by

their unaided efforts, by secret unions and physical force demonstrations, sought to establish their political claims. But the experiment at both periods entirely failed. They petitioned by millions for universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and voting by ballot ; but their prayers were unheeded by the Legislature. They were received in silence, excited no debate, seldom an observation. Unsupported by the intelligence and property of the community, the petitioners were known to be powerless, and their aims impracticable. Government on these as on former occasions was strengthened by violence, and an old lesson was a third or fourth time repeated. In 1780 parliamentary reform, as we have seen*, was on the eve of accomplishment by a combined effort of the middle and upper classes, when the end was frustrated and all desire for it extinguished by the intervention of the riots of Lord George Gordon. A dread of the ascendancy of the multitude was diffused among the wealthy, and they shrunk dismayed from cooperation in political changes. A similar revulsion ensued in 1793, differing from the former only in the fact that one originated in religious, the other in republican, zealotry.

Political agitation, and the coercive measures of government for its repression, ultimately culminated in two extravagances, which tended, in almost an equal degree, to render both unpopular, and alienate from them public sympathy. One was the discovery, or at least suppression, of an atrocious plot for the assassination of the king's ministers ; the other was the royal determination to bring to a public trial, for alleged adultery, while Princess of Wales, the queen of George IV. These events simultaneously occurred in 1820, and were alike odious in general estimation. In the maturing of both

* *Ante*, p. 460.

for public exhibition the questionable policy of espionage was extensively resorted to. Spies had been employed to watch the conduct of Queen Caroline abroad ; spies assisted at the midnight orgies of the Cato-Street conspirators, and encouraged them with blood-money ; and there was some difficulty in determining to what extent their diabolical scheme had been fostered by the myrmidons of the Home Office, or by rankling feelings of revenge engendered by the unpunished outrage in Lancashire, and the late repressive acts of parliament.

These opening occurrences caused the reign of George IV. to commence unfavourably. The queen's trial became an absorbing topic of interest. She had been absent from England six years, and for the last twenty-three had lived apart from her husband. Their marriage had been a union of policy, not of the affections. Their education and habits were unsuitable ; dislike ensued, and separation was the consequence. The heart and understanding of the queen were good, but had not been cultivated. Naturally gay and lively, she forgave anything but dulness* ; was affable and condescending, with a quick discernment of character, and accustomed to the license of a German court ; vehement in temper, unguarded in manners, and unrefined in tastes, she was unsuited to a fastidious consort, trained to polished life, and spoiled by self-indulgence. Her conduct abroad had been indiscreet, if not criminal. Rumours reached England that she had selected a handsome courier for her paramour, enriched and honoured him. While Princess of Wales her misdeeds would have been publicly unimportant had they been disregarded, and which the estrangement that had long subsisted between the royal pair required they should have been.

* Diary of George IV., vol. i. p. 255.

The foreign example of the princess, if abandoned as represented, could have been little hurtful to English society, and any contingent intervention with the succession to the throne was likely to be precluded by the age of the princess. But a commission had been indiscreetly appointed ; ministers had been made officially acquainted with the irregularities of her royal highness, and were bound to act upon the information. The princess was either guilty or innocent : if innocent, she was eligible to all the rights and privileges of a British queen ; if guilty, it ought to be proved. Caroline's spirit was high and intractable. She had been incensed by the omission of her name in the Liturgy, and by the refusal of due honour at foreign courts. She was indignant at hearing only of threats of degradation and exposure, and resolved to brave her persecutors by demanding a full recognition of her rights and the avowal of her innocence.

George IV. and his ministers believed the queen guilty, and July 5. 1820 a bill was introduced into the House of Lords for the degradation of the queen, and the dissolution of her marriage with the king. The examination of witnesses, speeches of counsel, and debates thereupon, with other proceedings anterior to the second reading, occupied parliament to the 6th of November, when a majority of twenty-eight peers appeared in favour of the bill. This majority was small. The adulterous connection charged, being committed with a foreigner, did not amount to treason ; it was not an indictable offence, only a civil wrong. Several peers objected to the divorce clause, and on the third reading the majority had dwindled to nine. Upon this Lord Liverpool announced that the bill was abandoned.

During the investigation of the Lords the excitement in the House of Commons and out of it against the

Degradation Bill continued of the most intense description. The entire country, in truth, was on the verge of insurrection ; and some of the military having caught the popular feeling, the crisis was pregnant with peril. This feeling, however, was in great part irrespective of the merits of the trial, and arose from the general impression of the provocations the queen had received, and the long and vindictive persecution she had sustained.

It is a common attribute of public, and very often of private occurrences, that those possessing great present have little enduring interest. The former was peculiarly the case with the queen's trial. It was the leading, and by far the most exciting, event of the reign, yet it has almost sunk into oblivion, and along with it the heated, and, measured by the occasion, the disproportionate ebullition of popular feeling that accompanied it. Had this celebrated connubial quarrel related to private individuals it would have challenged little interest or attention ; and viewed intrinsically, in reference to the high personages concerned, it appears to have been little more than one of those ordinary matrimonial disagreements so frequently adjudicated in Doctors' Commons, arising out of personal dislike, incompatible tastes or tempers, or late marriages anticipated by earlier attachments.

Popular excitements are mostly fleeting. The king rapidly regained his popularity. On opening the ensuing parliamentary session he mentioned the queen by name, and recommended to parliament a provision for her maintenance. This was done, and an annuity of 50,000*l.* a year settled on her majesty. She was not, however, allowed to share in the ceremony of the coronation, which was celebrated in the summer with unusual splendour. With her wonted spirit she attended personally to assert her right to be present ; but her exclusion did

not elicit any strong expression of public dissatisfaction, clearly showing that the previous excitement in her favour had abated. Her unexpected death three weeks after revived general sympathy in her misfortunes, and there were few who did not lament the fate of an illustrious princess, gifted with generous and heroic qualities. The king at the time was making his transitory visit to Ireland, under the laudable but mistaken impression that his presence would allay the factious spirit and relieve the chronic maladies of the kingdom.

It was an eventful year. An insurrectionary movement commenced in the southern states of Europe for the establishment of constitutional governments. It began in Spain, and succeeded in obtaining from Ferdinand a constitution whose chief defects were the premature disregard of popular prejudices. Portugal followed the example, and was equally successful. In Naples the Spanish constitution found imitators not less zealous than in the Peninsula. The flame did not stop here, but early in 1821 extended to Piedmont. The provinces of the Turkish empire were not unmoved by the fervour for representative institutions. In Moldavia and Wallachia there was a rising against the Porte, and which, by extending into the Morea, became, after a long struggle protracted by intestine divisions, the foundation of the independence of Greece.

Except the establishment of the Grecian kingdom, and the new empire of Brazil by its severance from Portugal, these promising demonstrations had no abiding issues. The mass of the population were unprepared for regeneration. They were ready enough to join in fêtes and diversions agreeable to usage and their taste, but they had neither the disposition, the principles, nor the habits to be interested in political changes. It was only the mi-

nority, composed of the adventurous and the intelligent of the middle classes, who cooperated in the revolutions ; the peasantry and the populace continued quiescent, neither opposing their progress nor their suppression. That the changes in the Peninsula and in Italy were not altogether premature, is attested by the fact that the insurrectionists were able to overturn the old authorities, and replace them by new institutions, which they would have maintained, despite of their errors, had not progress been arrested by the intervention of Bourbon France in Spain, and Austria in Italy.

This foreign intervention was the offspring of a novel confederation of despots, denominated the Holy Alliance. This celebrated league was established after the overthrow of Napoleon, and grew out of the subversive principles of the French revolution. Russia, Austria, and Prussia were the leading confederates. England was solicited to join the combination; but George IV. declined on constitutional grounds, contenting himself with a tacit approval of its objects. These objects were laudable so far as avowed, and as the avowed objects mostly are of every undertaking. They professed to go no further than the enforcement of practical Christianity in the government of nations, agreeably to the Christian doctrine. Their practices interpreted differently their designs, which appeared directed solely to the conservation, however replete with abuses, of existing governments, especially monarchies. They claimed to derive all power from God. They denounced all political changes not emanating from themselves as infringements of their divine vicegerency. They met periodically to determine the liberties of nations. At the cities where they assembled no strangers were allowed to remain ; nor was a secretary or reporter permitted to be present during their

discussions, lest he should divulge their mysterious proceedings ; but they usually terminated with the promulgation of a manifesto darkly expository of their views and intentions. Royal congresses of this character were successively held at Troppau, Laybach, and Verona. To Laybach Ferdinand of Naples was summoned to hear the fiat of the crowned heads whether he should be a constitutional or absolute king. They declared in favour of the latter ; and forthwith he was restored by Austrian bayonets, despite of his oaths and the wishes of his subjects. The same high tribunal decreed the reestablishment of Sardinian despotism. With Spain there was some demur ; but, finally, the subversion of her constitution was resolved upon, and France, or at least her ultra ministers, became the ready executive instruments of absolutism in Spain.*

The invasion of Spain by France in 1823 had the beneficial results of uniting and consummating the independence of the Spanish colonies of America. It also had the advantage of eliciting from England a prompt declaration of her intended policy towards the new transatlantic powers. That policy consisted in opening commercial relations with them, by the appointment of resident consuls, accompanied by Mr. Secretary Canning's announcement to the French government, that England would not interfere in any attempt Spain might make to reconquer her late possessions ; but she "would not permit any third power to attack them or reconquer them for her." Previously to this notification, the United States of America had, in the most formal manner, acknowledged the independence of the Spanish American provinces. Mr. Canning wished them to concur in a further step, and join England in a concerted declaration, as likely to be most

* From the Author's British History.

influential, against France or any continental power assisting Spain in the recovery of her transmarine possessions. But the States declined, acting on the great constitutional maxim which has been so conducive to the prosperity of the Union, of maintaining "peace and commerce with all nations, entangling alliances with none."*

The declaration of England was especially unpalatable to the Holy Alliance, and its distastefulness was augmented when, at the Verona congress, she protested against the right of the confederated despots to interfere in the internal affairs of the Peninsula. Britain being dissentient was fatal to the efficiency if not the existence of the regal combination, for, by her vast financial, naval, and military resources, she could always impede or frustrate their proceedings. The despots of the continent might thenceforward continue to announce, by circulars penned by Messrs. Gentz and Metternich, their mystical axioms of oppression; but the nations were apprised that England would not cooperate in their plans, or sanction their anti-progressive doctrines. It tended to dissolve that intimate union between this country and the continental states which the combined resistance to revolutionary France, thirty years previously, had called into existence.

* Residence at the Court of London, by the American Minister, Mr. Rush, vol. ii. p. 25. In another direction the United States were more adventurous; and President Monroe, in his message to Congress at the close of the year, took occasion to assert "as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States were involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they had assumed and maintained, were henceforth not to be considered as subjects for *future colonisation by any European power.*" This startling warning off from the entire New World was, of course, not acquiesced in by England, and gave umbrage to all the European states.

Our altered foreign policy operated favourably at home by inaugurating a more liberal system of internal legislation. Public intelligence had since 1820 pointed to financial economy, commercial freedom, and law reform ; and these domestic ameliorations, not involving constitutional changes, were favourably listened to by ministers, and their newly incorporated allies the Grenvilles. The Whigs kept up the feud with their opponents for power, but, unsupported by the masses, they could not effectively interfere with the crown in the choice of its servants. Radicalism, which avowed a mistrust of both parties for the accomplishment of organic improvements, had severed from them their popular allies ; and Whig differences with the ministerialists were rather in degree than in principle. To the maintenance of the great institutions in Church and State both parties were devoted ; but though the Whigs disowned the subversive doctrines of the Radicals, they justly claimed to themselves the credit of having opened the way to the Tories of a liberal commercial policy, the suppression of monopolies, a conciliatory system towards Ireland, and the recognition of the revolted nationalities of Spanish America.

In the absence of party strife, parliamentary debates were mostly of a pacific character. Ireland obtained a large share of attention, and after the grievous famine of 1822, a searching inquiry was instituted by the House of Lords into its social state and natural capabilities. Another subject efficiently pursued was Retrenchment in the public expenditure. Ministers were loth to return to a peace establishment in the army, navy, or public offices. During the waste and negligence of the war, pensions, sinecures, and over-paid places, had enormously multiplied. The Whigs, at intervals, assaulted these abuses ; but their

attacks were deficient in zeal or comprehensiveness. At length this unbeaten field was entered upon in good earnest; first by Sir Henry Parnell*, and afterwards by Mr. Joseph Hume, a Scotch member, of great shrewdness, practical sense, and indomitable perseverance. Mr. Hume began his labours in 1821; he continued them in succeeding sessions with resolution and ability, despite of the jeers of Canning, the ribaldry of Croker, and the solemn indignation of Huskisson; and supported by the public voice and independent members of both parties, and not unfrequently sheltered from the missiles of his assailants by the protecting ægis of Henry Brougham's matchless eloquence, important economical reforms resulted from his exertions.

A remarkable feature in the progress of National Industry has been the reactions to which it has been periodically liable. If enterprise and judicious speculation have constituted the victories of commercial men, the revulsions growing out of over-trading and illusive undertakings have been their defeats, and often, like the reverses of an army, have more than counterbalanced anterior triumphs. These periodical vicissitudes have been almost of as regular recurrence, though at more distant intervals, as the return of the seasons, and have sometimes been traced to the avidity of banking operations and the issue of paper money. But there were mercantile crises anterior to these valuable auxiliaries of the monetary system. In 1763 there was a great mercantile revulsion; and again, in 1772—73, one still more overwhelming, and which Macpherson describes † as wholly subversive of private credit,

* Financial Resolutions, moved by Sir H. Parnell, July 1. 1819.

† Annals of Commerce, vol. iii. p. 533., and vol. iv. p. 8. Also the Author's History of the Productive Classes, p. 42. Chambers.

and paralysing to all commercial transactions. But these early disasters were unconnected with banking and the issue of paper money. Country banks only became generally established in the prosperous interval between the American War of Independence and 1793, and their business bore little relation to the gigantic transactions of the great houses which rose on their foundations. By the extensive issuing, advancing, and discounting of these colossal establishments more ready facilities were afforded to speculation, which tended to aggravate and render more frequent reactions, though they were not the primary origin of them. That may be always traced to preexisting causes, to the tendency of low prices to augment consumption, consumption demand, and demand a mercantile avidity, fostered by a rapid extension of private credit, open accounts, and commercial paper. It is to the last—the profuse creation of bills of exchange—the banks and large discounting houses are auxiliary, by which they feed the flame of speculative ventures, though they are not the first to kindle them.

Beyond this complicity neither the Bank of England nor the provincial banks seem to have participated in the production of the Mercantile Crisis of 1825—26. It had its source in the gush of prosperity of the three preceding years, indicated by the low rate of interest, and prompting a wild spirit of speculation in South American loans and mines, and joint-stock schemes of every imaginable description for the employment of capital. Excess of riches occasioned general recklessness in the application of them; and this redundancy was augmented by the profuse issues of the Bank of England, combined with an almost boundless extension of private credit. The result was a very disastrous revulsion in the failure of banks, increase of bankruptcies, and collapse of bubble companies. It long

weighed on the industrial energies of the country, and arrested progress. Before the mercantile crisis, and in the quietude of polities, the public mind had taken a gratifying direction. Instead of the abundance of peace being associated with an increase of crime and licentiousness, as in former reigns, the people converted the advantages of their situation to moral and intellectual improvements. At no former period had there been evinced so general a desire for information ; a desire, too, not limited to a particular class, but extending to all classes. The opulent formed themselves into philosophical and literary societies ; while the working people established mechanics', apprentice, and gymnastic institutions. A new university for London was suggested by Thomas Campbell, and energetically promoted by Henry Brougham, for the accommodation of the middle classes of society. Cheap publications for disseminating useful knowledge were issued in vast numbers ; and both soil and seed being favourable, it was impossible to anticipate other—had not the monetary derangement intervened—than a rich harvest of social benefits.

It was only at the close of the premiership of the Earl of Liverpool that symptoms appeared, though feeble ones, of returning prosperity. The earl's ministry had been long, but undistinguished. Its chief characteristic had been inertness. Instead of an impulse, it had been a drag on the advancing intelligence of the community ; and the few and inefficient public reforms that had been carried during the twelve years since the peace, had been reluctantly conceded by the timid and narrow spirit of his administration. Moreover, his government had become weak from internal jealousies and divisions on the Catholic question. Upon this they had agreed to differ ; a principle of compromise admissible on minor questions, but

not on fundamental ones, and often more convenient to the contracting parties than conducive to efficiency or integrity of purpose. Chiefly from the determinate will of the king, the short-lived ministry of Mr. Canning succeeded, formed by union with a Whig section under the Marquis of Lansdowne, who lent their aid to the new premier, abruptly deserted by his former colleagues, upon the basis of averting the formation of a more illiberal ministry, and forwarding Whig measures of public amelioration. The death of Mr. Canning, four months after his elevation, did not immediately dissolve the cabinet; but misunderstandings ensued, and it expired before the end of the year.

The premature death of Mr. Canning in his fifty-seventh year was much regretted by a numerous circle of admirers. Like his patron, Mr. Pitt, he commenced public life by an overture to the Whigs; but identified his fortunes with that distinguished leader, to whom, by his oratory in the senate and his squibs and satires in the "Antijacobin," he rendered efficient support during the war. He was a clever partisan, and a highly accomplished man; but occasionally failed in candour and consistency in his political hostilities. He agreed with the Grenvilles on several of their measures, as the abolition of the slave-trade, though he bitterly reviled them, as he had previously done the Addingtons; and he accepted office in the anti-popery ministry of Perceval, though he despised the prejudiced alarm upon which it had been established. He thought lightly of the abilities of Lord Castlereagh, sought to displace him, quarrelled and fought a duel with him, and then accepted a subordinate place under his lordship. His silence in office on the Catholic question might be allowable, since it could not, in truth, have been carried, either with the concurrence of the people or the

king. There was a yielding to expediency in these incidents of his career, but no absolute dereliction of principle. Indeed, the character of Mr. Canning for private honour and integrity cannot be impugned. His contemptuous revilings of constitutional reform constituted his chief opprobrium. It was partly redeemed by his relinquishment of office rather than share in the persecution of Queen Caroline ; and his conduct in respect of the independence of Greece and of the Spanish colonies attests that his early sympathies with human freedom had never been erased. Had he lived, it may be doubted whether he would have been long able to maintain himself at the head of affairs, opposed as he was by his own party, and mainly dependent on the conditional support of the Whigs. His declaration against concessions to the dissenters was indiscreet, if not inconsistent. He was too personally susceptible of, as well as obnoxious to attack, and lacked the gravity of character and intellect essential to the steady government of an empire. His wit, fine scholarship, elegant manners, and political talents made him the nucleus of a select circle of adherents, all eminent for ability and, like himself, with a strong affection for official life. Earl Dudley and Ward was one of these ; but his brilliant parts were unhappily dimmed by a morbid idiosyncrasy. Mr. Huskisson was another disciple, of solid and comprehensive attainments, and among the first who ably advocated the policy of relaxation in our protective system of commerce and navigation. A “lone star” of this constellation survives in Viscount Palmerston, whose energetic and diversified career, closing with the premiership and the termination of the Russian war, is likely to win for him more distinguished historical fame than the brother luminaries with which in his early public life he was associated.

In desperate cases boldness is prudence. Upon this principle George IV. appears to have acted. The elevation of Mr. Canning was experimental, but his fleeting ministry, and that of Lord Goderich, apparently exhausted all the available fragments of the Tory party, which had so long borne sway. The king, however, was not disposed to surrender unconditionally to the Whig phalanx under Earl Grey, and resolved on a second bold stroke of prerogative. He summoned the Duke of Wellington to his councils, empowering him to form a ministry. His Grace was a Tory and anti-catholic. Liberalism was supposed to be wholly alien to his nature, force and absoluteness his sole weapons of domination. These popular impressions may have been correct, but partial ; resulting from imperfect knowledge of the entire character of the minister,— his sterling good sense, and zeal for the public welfare. Past events had shown the mischief of an exclusive domestic policy, its disturbing and obstructive resistance to national progress, and the time had arrived for trying a more liberal system.

Civil disqualifications on account of religious differences may have been needful securities in the infancy of a Protestant constitution, but had ceased to be defensible. Dissent was no longer a type of political discontent, nor Catholicism of a divided allegiance. It was unprofitable injustice, as well as fraught with danger to the empire. It was a source of weakness in war, of divided councils in peace. Ministry after ministry had fallen to pieces, solely on account of religious exclusions. An efficient and united administration could not be formed because men of ability and patriotism would not be parties to an obsolete code of intolerance. Concession was not a new policy ; it began in the preceding reign, by granting to Irish papists the rights of inheritance, to open schools, to

practise in courts of law, to serve in the army and navy, and to vote at parliamentary elections. Further concessions were now sought ; and the new premier, with his wonted energy and decision, resolved that they should not be withheld, and to signalise his ministry by an unexpected career of wisdom and conciliation.

The first advance of his Grace was the adoption of Lord John Russell's bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, by which municipal corporations and offices of power and trust were opened to the dissenters. On the motion of the confidential friend of the duke, Sir Robert Peel, an efficient finance committee was appointed by which a lavish waste of public money in the granting of life annuities was checked. Next followed commissions of inquiry into the state of the laws, founded on a luminous exposition of legal defects and institutions by Henry Brougham. A corn bill which had failed in the preceding session was passed in this, a trifle more favourable in its provisions to the agriculturist. These were important but subordinate measures. The battle of giants remained to be fought, and the all-conquering duke did not shrink from the conflict.

Ireland, in 1829, presented an extraordinary spectacle. On the verge of rebellion she had often been alleged to be in the last half century, but her present symptoms were more alarming and unmanageable than open force. By a novel species of agitation, carried on by itinerant orators, who with the zeal of missionaries set forth the wrongs of their country, but who constantly deprecated illegal violence, the Catholic Association had obtained entire control of the population. They ordered a census of the people, to make more glaring the Protestant minority, and levied a tribute under the name of "rent" to wage a peaceful war against Irish grievances. A

source of power was discovered in the forty-shilling free-holders. These had been mostly created by the landlords for political purposes. Under the influence of their priests, they deserted at the poll their former masters, and returned their great leader, Daniel O'Connell, for the county of Clare. In the event of a dissolution the Catholics boasted they could return, by the aid of the *forties*, seventy members to parliament, pledged to oppose every ministerial measure until emancipation was conceded.

In the face of a resistance like this it was impossible to govern Ireland. It was not a contest of physical force, but of opinion based upon right, and the Orange Societies and Brunswick clubs were rendered powerless. A series of conversions rapidly followed this new aspect of affairs ; among them the viceroy of Ireland, and the ducal premier himself. Parliament opened with the announcement that the "forties" were to be disfranchised, and Catholic disabilities to be removed. Necessity, not choice, had conquered. Still praise is due to the vanquished as well as to the victors. They achieved the greatest triumph in conquering themselves, in surrendering to the commonweal long cherished prepossessions. The king, ministry, church, aristocracy, and commons, were all adverse to Catholic Emancipation ; but led by the example of the iron duke, who united under his banner a larger following than would have been possible to any other leader, they succumbed to the emergency.

The greatest political transitions are often unforeseen, often come unexpectedly, and from unappreciated causes. The rule of Wellington was expected to be stern and inflexible ; it proved eminently yielding and conciliatory. The forty-shilling freeholders had been created for landlord purposes ; they proved a powerful instrument of their political humiliation. The conduct of statesmen is fre-

quently determined by the imperative adjuncts of their position. Usurpers at the outset are always affluent in promises and popular arts; and the leaders of parties often find it to their interest to belie their previous reputation. This is peculiarly the case with political bodies, whose power depends on popularity. Secure of the support of their own adherents, they seek to neutralise opposition by making converts among opponents, through the adoption of their measures and opinions. It thus frequently happens in England, that a Tory ministry, whose authority is precarious, will incline to a Whig policy, and a Whig ministry become rather conservative. Consequently each ascendancy in its turn is apt to be charged with apostasy or ingratitude, which, however, is neither, only the unavoidable result of stinted resources, and the limited patronage at their disposal compelling them so to distribute it as to secure the amplest return of efficient services and cooperation.

The remaining measures of this reign were of popular import, chiefly consisting in the repeal of the excise duties on beer, cider, and leather. Dropsy, the natural sequel of a convivial life, and which carried off at an early age the uncles of the king, and within the last three years the Duke of York and the Princess Royal, closed the career of George IV. in June 1830. He had not been so orthodox in the observance of the domestic virtues as his royal parent, and was of less cautious shrewdness; but in social polish and accomplishments he transcended all his Brunswick predecessors. Possessed of a magnificent civil list, a princely education, richly endowed by nature, he might, independently of his illustrious descent and kingly inheritance, fearlessly compete with his loftiest peers in all the graces and refinements of the aristocratic circle.

While Prince of Wales he was mostly popular. Of a noble person and mien, elegant in manners, of quick and lively parts, correct taste, especially in the fine arts, the prince was well qualified to win general favour and become the idol of the fashionable world, and in a less degree of the populace. Scientific instruction was not then so exigent an element of culture as at present; but in a knowledge of the classics, modern languages, constitutional law, and general acquirements, the king was equal to the average of his courtiers. It was creditable to his early preferences that he attached himself to the brilliant if rather dissolute, society of Charles Fox, Burke, and Sheridan. He was the votary of pleasure, and the very Comus of mirth. Wherever there was gaiety—wherever “Sport leaped up to seize her beechen bough”—wherever there was a festive gathering—there was the prince. He certainly belonged to the Epicurean school, but to that form of it which unites wit and elegance with great license, and renders the intellect itself handmaid to luxurious indulgence. Though so far a voluptuary, habitual grossness cannot be justly imputed to him. His character has been said to be feminine—fickle, suspicious, and impulsive. His love of female society may have induced this resemblance; but his connections with women were mostly of a kind that combined other and more refined attractions than mere sensuality, and of which the selection for his first mistress of the accomplished Mary Robinson, and subsequently of the decorous Mrs. Fitzherbert, are examples. The existence of only one legitimate daughter, and no avowed natural offspring, negative the assumption of very indiscriminate libertinism.

In the English government the personal character of the sovereign is a less material element than in despotisms.

The constitution has wisely provided for the moral or intellectual obliquities of hereditary succession, and a Sybarite or a philosopher may wield the British sceptre. A permanent regency is always forthcoming either to supply deficiencies or accommodate itself to superior capacity. It is only political responsibility that is shifted, and the advantage appears rather in favour of a lax than efficient chief magistrate ; for if the king is competent and alert in the discharge of regal duties, he exercises great powers without liability — he “can do no wrong ;” whereas, in the case of an incapable prince, his authority necessarily devolving upon his ministers, they exercise power sheltered by no constitutional fiction, but subject to a direct accountability to the national representatives for their administration.

George IV. was quite equal to the maintenance of the dignity of his station and the exercise of its prerogatives. He was independent in his rule, but neither so unyielding nor dissembling as the late king. He surrendered his prepossessions against the Catholic claims. He submitted to the marital choice of the Princess Charlotte, though Prince Leopold was disagreeable to him ; and though he had by previous arrangement betrothed her to the Prince of Orange, which, viewed merely as a state alliance, was apparently the more eligible match : but he shrunk from controlling his daughter in an affair in which she was principally concerned, especially after the lesson of practical wisdom afforded by his own unhappy marriage. His secession from the Opposition in 1793 implied neither caprice nor dereliction of principles, only a suspension of them in common with distinguished names. He always evinced a disposition to be reunited to his early friends, and this would have been consummated on the death of Perceval in

1812, had it not been for their somewhat intrusive pretensions to appointments in the royal household. By the rupture on this court punctilio the government during the Regency and the earlier portion of his reign continued eighteen years longer politically conservative and adverse to organic changes. But the progress of England is not wholly dependent on the character of its ministry. Unlike despotic states, in which nothing can take root and thrive unless patronised by the sovereign or his servants, the people themselves command the chief elements of advancement by their numerous religious, civil, and social subdivisions, each possessing a self-dependent power of action and development; so that if the state be incapable or indifferent, society in its several constituents may, in its reciprocal competitions and emulation, be energetically progressive.

It follows that the intellectual impulse which had been awakened in the past reign continued with unabated force, and presented nearly the same features. Science continued more literary and applicable to common uses, and literature more scientific. Whatever was useful, ornamental, or enjoyable, received encouragement from prince or people. Four acts of munificence distinguished the king,—in the literary mission to Portici, for expediting the unrolling of the Herculaneum manuscripts; the endowment of the Royal Society of Literature; his present of the library of George III. to the British Museum; and the support he afforded to the erection of St. David's College, in Wales. The exploration of the ancient records of the kingdom, with a view to its juridical and institutional illustration, was steadily persevered in. It was, however, chiefly the imitative arts, or light literature, not the available pursuits of science, that were especially favoured by the patronage of the crown or its

ministers. Poetry and the production of works of imagination formed the notable characteristics of the time, and have been slightly glanced at under George III. Their authors received marked notice from his successor, were invited to the royal table, and one or two of them at least shared in the brilliant fêtes celebrated at Carlton House during the Regency *, without fastidiousness as to the birth or aristocratic connexions of the aspirants.

* Of his dining with the Prince, Sir Walter Scott has left an amusing narrative, too well known to be quoted. The first introduction of the author of "Lalla Rookh" was of earlier date, and Thomas Moore seems to have been highly pleased with the fascinating manners of the Regent: "When I was presented to him, he said he was very happy to know a man of my abilities; and when I thanked him for the honour he did me in permitting the dedication of 'Anacreon,' he stopped me, and said the honour was entirely his, in being allowed to put his name to a work of such merit. He then said that he hoped, when he returned to town in the winter, we should have many opportunities of enjoying each other's society; that he was passionately fond of music, and had long heard of my talents in that way."—*Memoirs and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, vol. i. p. 108.

Mr. Moore was among the guests invited to the famous Carlton House gala, June 21. 1811. "Nothing," he says, "was ever half so magnificent; it was in reality all they try to imitate in the gorgeous scenery of the theatre, and I really sat for three quarters of an hour in the Prince's room after supper, silently looking at the spectacle, and feeding my eyes with the assemblage of beauty, splendour, and profuse magnificence."—*Ibid.* p. 255.

The newspapers were full of this display. There were present upwards of 2000 of the nobility and gentry, including the French princes and emigrant noblesse; rivalling in splendour and dissipation *la vieille cour de Versailles*. The public were admitted for several days afterwards to see the costly arrangements; the crowd was immense, and many accidents occurred; several ladies had their dresses torn from their backs, and were to be seen in groups in Carlton Gardens, with dishevelled hair, and divested of much of their drapery.

The dispositions of the king were favourable to artis-
tical embellishments, and under his auspices began those
splendid street improvements of the metropolis by Nash,
in which architectural symmetry was sought to be com-
bined with utility and local convenience. The same
creative spirit metamorphosed the tangled jungle of St.
James's Park into its present beauties of promenade and
prospect; and reclaimed from dreariness the outlying
domain of Regent's Park, now the site of ornate villas,
noble mansions, and gardens of science. The royal palaces
were not neglected. Pimlico Palace was partly renovated
by raising the wings; but the most splendid and exten-
sive improvements were made at Windsor Castle. At
this magnificent seat of the British monarchy, under the
directive conception of James Wyatt, new towers were
erected; three sides of the exterior of the quadrangle were
surrounded with a spacious terrace; and the grand avenue
of the Long Walk, leading from the south entrance of the
Castle, crowned with an equestrian monument to George
III., of which his successor laid the first stone. These
princely works, and the triumphal arches and statuary
honours at the west end, in commemoration of the victory
of Waterloo, with a multiplication of churches, of squares,
terraces, and superb residences, in every style and taste,
were the foundation of those architectural distinctions
which rendered London, already superior in riches and
population, not inferior in grandeur to any European
capital.

Embellishment was appropriate to the Augustan age
of peace. But all progress was not comprised in orna-
mentation, or the arts of elegance and luxury. The
marvellous power of steam continued its substitutions for
animal force, and, from mining and manufacturing, had
been extended to road travelling, river and sea naviga-

tion. Science in all her more gainful pursuits was zealously cultivated, not only as a source of individual opulence, but of national superiority. Chemistry and its application to agriculture, geology, mineralogy, civil engineering, anatomy, medicine, and geographical researches in Africa and the Arctic regions, constituted the just pride of the period. To the illustrious names of Watt, Arkwright, Brindley, Black, Smeaton, Priestley, Dollond, Cavendish, and Playfair, which shed lustre on the reign of George III., may be added, as the contemporary distinction of his successor, those of Davy, Herschel, Wollaston, Dalton, Ivory, Buckland, Faraday, Babbage, Leslie, Young, Arnott, Airey, Telford, M'Adam, Brunel, and Rennie.

In public legislation several measures of substantial utility were achieved. Prior to 1824, great diversities existed in the Weights and Measures of the kingdom ; there was no uniform standard in the community. Every county, and almost every parish, differed in its gauges of weight, superficies, and capacity ; and also in the materials of which they consisted, some being of stone, some of wood, lead, pewter, or iron. People could not understand each other in their daily transactions ; and their misunderstandings were a fertile source of fraud and strife. An act of parliament remedied all this mischief and confusion. In place of former incongruities, an imperial standard yard, pound, gallon, and bushel were fixed, and the principle laid down by which they might be renewed, if lost or deteriorated. The currency of the realm was in a like state of disorder : there was no measure of mercantile exchange ; no secure representative of value. Unauthorised individuals supplied the copper coins of trade ; the silver coinage was debased and obliterate ; the gold

driven out of the country, and its place supplied by bales of paper money, issued *ad libitum* by hundreds or thousands of private bankers. Legislation successively grappled with this mass of evils, and replaced their crude instrumentality with a solid representative medium of value, secure, stable, and convenient.

Intimately connected with the reform of the metallic currency was the resumption of payments in specie by the Bank of England. The restriction on cash payments by the Bank had been imposed under the exigencies of the year 1797, and had been continued during the war and the first years of peace. But the country had recovered, and the time had become favourable for subjecting the Bank to former liabilities for its paper issues. In 1819 an act was passed, which acquired from its author the name of "Peel's Bill," and which definitely fixed May, 1823, for resuming payments in specie. But the Bank, having accumulated a large supply of gold, anticipated this period, and recommenced specie payments two years earlier. An outcry was raised, by a small party headed by Messrs. Atwood and Western, against this timely restoration, on the ground of its altering the standard of value by a diminution of the currency, and thereby reducing the prices of commodities. But there was little if any reason for ascribing this transition in value to legislation, though it has continued to be urged up to the present period. All that Peel's Bill did was to replace the Bank under its original and legitimate obligations; and which it was enabled to resume by the increase of its circulation, consequent on the failure of the provincial banks, and the rise of the value of its paper nearly to a par with gold. In 1815, Bank of England notes, which had been depreciated sixteen per cent., rose in 1818, without government interference, to within about two and a half per

cent. of the value of gold.* Consequently the rise in the value of the currency could not have resulted from Mr. Peel's Bill, since the change had been in great part consummated before Mr. Peel's Act had passed. It follows that the fall in prices, by which rents, taxes, annuities, and all fixed payments became more onerous, must be traced to other causes ; namely, to a diminution in the cost of production, to the competition of foreign products, and the extinction of home monopolies. This view was taken by Messrs. Huskisson and Ricardo, and parliament passed a resolution † against altering the "standard of gold or silver in fineness, weight, or denomination."

Another public measure of a less general character than the maintenance of the monetary standard, or of that of weights and measures, may be noted. It was the establishment in 1829 of the Police of the metropolis. Previously the vast population of London and its vicinity was left principally to the care of parochial watchmen, aged and decrepid, without unity or discipline, and wholly unfit for the protection of either persons or property. Without interference with the judicial duties of the existing magistracy, the new police became a separate and organised body, trained to its duties under the direction of two commissioners, and limited to the executive function of preventing crimes and apprehending offenders. Its jurisdiction has been extended to persons and places within fifteen miles of Charing Cross, the city of London excepted.

It is manifest from this legislative retrospect that the fashion and purpose of parliamentary business was becoming more practical and less factious and discursive. Occasionally there were grand debates on foreign policy ;

* M'Culloch's Commercial Dictionary, ed. 1854, p. 79.

† House of Commons, June 11. 1822.

but the staple topics were home interests, in the discussion of which facts and cogent arguments obtained paramount attention. Consequently there was less of the rhetorical glitter of eloquence, and the reason and experience were appealed to, rather than the fancy or imagination. Tables and arithmetic superseded tropes and metaphors; and the pyrotechnical flashes which were popular in the dramatic shows of a Chatham, Burke, or Sheridan, disappeared amidst political economy, newspaper commentary and reporting, and the solid folios sessionally issued by parliamentary committees, often replete with information on the varied and important interests of the empire. It gave a character also to the productions of the press, as well as to the proceedings of the legislature. Economical questions were elaborately investigated in the writings of Malthus, Ricardo, Torrens, Mill, M'Culloch, and Thompson; but the economists were not agreed as to the correctness or value of the additions made to Political Economy since the days of Adam Smith. The relations of rent, profit, and wages, and the coadequation of subsistence to population, were the issues upon which they were principally divided. Great contemporary interest was given to this national study by the unsettled state of the currency and banking, commercial vicissitudes, and the miseries of indigence. It also derived importance from the narrow policy sought to be pursued by neighbouring states. Impressed by our riches and greatness, but mistaking their sources, foreigners sought to emulate our prosperous career by fostering monopolies and restrictions the futility of which England had discovered and begun to relinquish.

Except in its economical bearings, Political Philosophy was not successfully cultivated. The shrewd and practical, but crude and unscientific work of Paley continued the standard publication. The celebrated Jeremy Ben-

tham, with a mind of singular acuteness and extraordinary devotedness during half a century, sought to introduce more general principles in morals, jurisprudence, and legislation; but, either from prevailing doubts of their soundness, perplexities in the style of his later writings, or their incompatibility with existing opinions, he had only partial success with his countrymen. Metaphysics continued unheeded, and left to the fond love of Dugald Stewart; and even this accomplished writer, treading in the cautious steps of Dr. Reid, seemed more disposed to limit than extend the range of his nebulous science.

The Quarterly Reviews, which had now attained a high place in periodical literature and criticism, helped greatly to familiarise the public mind with erudite or intricate problems of general concernment and discussion. The "Edinburgh Review" is the oldest of these celebrated journals, and began its career in 1802. It was not, however, the first of the name; an "Edinburgh Review" was attempted in 1755, to which the author of the "Wealth of Nations," Dr. Robertson the historian, Mr. Jardine, and Alexander Wedderburn, first Earl of Rosslyn, were contributors. From a letter in the second number (p. 121.), it appears to have failed from being almost wholly devoted to the literature of Scotland; "a country just beginning," as Dr. Adam Smith remarked, "to figure in the learned world." The second attempt was made under more favourable auspices, and for which a suitable opening had been created by the great events which agitated the last ten years of the eighteenth century. The shock of the French revolution extended to everything; and among its more healthy disturbances may be reckoned the manly vigour and expansion it gave to intellectual inquiries. For a time

the burden seemed to be raised which had long weighed on the mental energies, and mankind escaped from a ghostly and repressive servitude. Like Columbus, the first adventurers, Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Southey, and Coleridge, mistook the gradual and practical pathway to human felicity ; but their daring loosened the conventional bonds of society, and enabled later explorers more assuredly to profit by their enthusiastic aberrations.

It was at the favourable juncture made by this preliminary opening, that the “Edinburgh Review” was projected by Jeffrey, Brougham, Sydney Smith, and Francis Horner, young men of mediocre fortune, but of ardent and richly cultivated minds, and all of whom rose to merited eminence.* Previously to the commencement of this enterprise, periodical criticism had degenerated into political partisanship, venality, and subserviency to trade interests, unredeemed by any breadth of view, critical force, or discrimination. Newspaper literature and character were at as low an ebb.† By the establishment of the new journal, a more independent and philosophical spirit began to be infused into literary strictures. Fanaticism and intolerance were rebuked ; a just and healthy

* The lamented Horner died prematurely. He contributed four articles to the first number, on emigration, banking, and currency.

† The oldest of the present morning papers were established between 1770 and 1788. “They began,” Mr. Wright says, “in accordance with the depraved taste as well as manners of that age, with courting popularity by detailing largely the most indelicate private scandal, and with coarse libels on public and private characters.” (*England under the House of Hanover*, vol. ii. p. 373.) Apart from the vices of their origin, to which it may have been necessary to pander in order to obtain a remunerative existence, the journals had rendered invaluable public services, as before noticed (*ante*, p. 446.)

morality inculcated ; dreams of human perfectibility were superseded by more attainable advances ; the immovability of the academical regimen of the universities deprecated, and, with other public questions of the time, made generally interesting and intelligible. It is to these early efforts that the upper and middle ranks are indebted for much of their progress in knowledge and liberality in the present century. Their great influence over public opinion and letters gave rise to a counter-publication in the "Quarterly Review," started by Walter Scott, Canning, Gifford, Croker, and Ellis, who considered the northern periodical to be perverting the general taste from the mediæval, orthodox, and classical by its large circulation.* The new journal, like its elder brother, was ably conducted ; and most of its writers being connected with the government, its articles were not only valuable for literary ability, but often for the official information to which the authors had access ; advantages which, with the knowledge the public had that the "Quarterly" was the *per contra* side on public questions, soon raised it nearly to a level with its predecessor in influence. Both, however, were party journals, one representing the Whigs, the other the Tories ; conse-

* Mr. Barrow ascribes the first suggestion of the "Quarterly" to the late Mr. Murray (*Autobiography*, p. 492.) ; but it is probable Sir Walter Scott had the largest share in its paternity. Although Mr. Jeffrey, the conductor of the "Edinburgh," had been lavish in his praises of the "Great Unknown," he had indulged in some caustic strictures on Scott's "Marmion ;" contending that the building of an abbey or feudal castle would be as germane to the age, as the revival of the obsolete rhyming and grotesque usages of our forefathers. Mr. Barrow, then Secretary to the Admiralty, was a valuable auxiliary in the "Quarterly," contributing in the whole 195 articles, one of which, on the Polar Basin, in No. XXXVI., raised the sale by 1000 copies.

quently together they did not fully represent the existing mind of the community; and this desideratum gave rise to the establishment of the “Westminster Review,” under the auspices of Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, Dr. Bowring, and Sir William Molesworth. Further than into three — two extremes and an intermediate — few things can be subdivided without degenerating into mere sectarianism, — vanishing points, or self-destructive refinements. Each Quarterly had its mission, and of course its special obliquities of vision ; but their tripartite views of men and things have corrected and neutralised their dominant tendencies or shortcomings in Politics, Philosophy, and Letters, by which the grand jury of the public has been better enabled to arrive at just conclusions on vexed topics and inquiries. They have been a recreative as well as useful intellectual treasure; and from the position and private histories of the parties now known to have been connected with them, they have contributed to elevate the literary caste itself into higher social consideration.

They did not, however, fill the entire field of Literature. Lighter and more evanescent troops skirmished on the flanks of the Quarterlies. George the Fourth’s regency and reign was, indeed, redolent of everything grave and gay. It was ennobled by history and science, but not unadorned or unenlivened by poetry, criticism, works of imagination, and the productions of the fine arts. Hallam, Lingard, Mackintosh, Roscoe, Palgrave, Landor, Disraeli, Walter Scott, Thomas Moore, Byron, Crabbe, Maria Edgeworth, Elliott, Hogg, Baillie, Southey, Coleridge, Campbell, and Montgomery, are enduring names that would shed lustre on any age. In essay and sprightly periodical writing, Hazlitt, Lamb, Horace and James Smith, Leigh Hunt, Wilson, Lockhart, and Maginn shone

conspicuous, and completed, with other auxiliaries, the intellectual array of a brilliant period.

Music rose into an intoxicating passion, and Mr. Wilberforce deplored its bewitching fascinations, from being taken by the higher classes in early concerts as a morning dram. Madame Catalani was the great bird of song. With her imperial voice and imperious execution, this powerful cantatrice swamped the orchestra and all stage accompaniments, herself sole queen. But her reign was brief ; she surprised more than pleased, and the novelty over, she was discovered to be an untunable autocrat, with an “odious husband constantly in her train.”* Spectacle and show continued to gain on the classical drama : newly fashioned in manner and costume, it had flourished under David Garrick ; culminated in grandeur of scenery and action under the Kembles ; but towards the close of the present period began to decline — became less and less the mirror of life ; and its brains were knocked out, in common with the Italian Opera, in which the poetical expression of sense or sentiment was lost in melody or screams, or a “sound so fine that nothing lives ‘twixt it and silence.” Metre without meaning, or nonsense verses in university fashion, were held most compatible with good music† ; or songs might be made to notes only, without words, after the manner of Mendelssohn. This can hardly be held to have been progress ; it is the sensuous gaining on the spiritual, and the human voice made no more expressive of the inward spirit than a Pan’s pipe or stringed instrument. But the transition may probably be traced less to a depravation or loss of genuine taste, than to change of social habits. After banqueting on champagne nearly

* *Memoirs and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, vol. i. p. 255.

† *Memoirs of the Opera*, p. 214.

till midnight, only vivid entertainments are likely to be impressible, and scenic illusions, or the poetry of motion, be most apt to the excited senses and obfuscated intellect.

In Painting there was advancement. The Angerstein Collection of thirty-seven pictures was bought by government for 37,000*l.*, and, with Sir George Beaumont's munificent contribution of rare works, became the nucleus of a National Gallery. This was better than in Pitt's time, who begrudged the most trifling amount from war expenditure for a Tintoret or Paul Veronese.* But it was a peculiarity in the organism of this minister, which he shared with Mr. Canning, that neither had any sympathy for the most finished productions of the pencil.

* Mr. Pitt was offered the Pitti Gallery for a few thousands, but would not reduce the "navy one middy for a Medicean Venus." — *Quarterly Review*, Dec. 1850.

CHAPTER XXXI.

REFORM ERA UNDER WILLIAM IV.

Principle of Permanence in Royal Dynasties.—Identity of Character and Fortune in the Stuarts and Bourbons.—Paris Insurrection and Expulsion of Charles X.—A General Movement in the Continental Capitals; its Effect on England.—Resignation of the Duke of Wellington, and Establishment of the Reform Ministry.—Introduction of the Bill for Parliamentary Reform; its Reception in the Commons.—Dissolution of Parliament; Reform Bill re-introduced, and carried, but rejected by the Lords.—A Reform Bill a third Time brought forward; the Lyndhurst Motion carried; Ministers resign; and are recalled on the Failure to form a Tory Ministry.—Intervention of the Crown to carry the Reform Bill.—Meeting of the Reformed Parliament; its splendid Legislation; Abolition of West India Slavery; Renewal with Amendments of the Charters of the East India Company and Bank of England; Reform of the Poor Laws and Municipal Corporations.—Commutation of Tithes.—New Marriage Act.—Foreign Policy; Severance of Belgium and Holland; Intervention in Favour of Turkey.—Division in the Cabinet; the Appropriation Clause; Retirement of Earl Grey.—Dismissal of the Reform Ministry; Popular Excitement; Ministry of Sir Robert Peel; Progress in Liberalism; Failure of the Peel Ministry, and Formation of the Melbourne Cabinet.—Lord Brougham.—Conciliation of Ireland; Orange Lodges discountenanced; Improvements in the Magistracy, Grand Juries, and internal Navigation.—General Prosperity of the Empire.—Death of the King and of eminent Public Characters.

THE emotions arising from the external objects perceptible by the senses are mutable and fleeting impressions; but the deeper affections of the heart, and the associations of the intellect, are fixed and more enduring. It is only in the former that man can be considered a changeful being; in the ties and sympathies which grow up with

him from childhood, and in the principles and conclusions resulting from experience, reflection, and constant intercourse he is exemplary for faith and loyalty. They form his code of life, and daily routine of conscious existence ; and if severed from them he feels deprived of his accustomed aliment, guidance, and wonted sources of security and contentment.

It is to the less changeable attributes of human nature that may be traced the permanence which has mostly signalised the laws, institutions, and ruling dynasties of mankind. Their authority and indestructibility have been derived from length of time, constant familiarity, tradition, and from being the inheritance of many succeeding generations. Hence has arisen the perpetuity of the royal and imperial families of Europe, and which have mostly been coeval in duration with their respective nationalities. Nations have clung to them as they are wont to cling to the primitive mountain range or river frontier which prescribes their territorial boundaries ; or as private persons cling to cherished heirlooms, the paternal mansion or domain transmitted by remote ancestors. There is only one, or at most two, of the old regal houses of Europe which have been entirely uprooted and cast aside, and whose return appears irreversibly foreclosed by the will of the peoples they governed. The Stuarts have wholly disappeared, and may be reckoned among the extinct races of royalty ; but the Bourbons continue to have representative branches, whose future destiny it would be rash to pronounce upon. In the fortunes of these two celebrated monarchical houses, whose histories fill so large and diversified a page of the European annals, certain identities may be remarked in the facts that both were dethroned by the most advanced communities of the world, and that the disruption with both was a reluctant one, and only became final after

exemplary punishment had been first tried, and next pardon and a renewed attempt at endurance. Neither experiment succeeded. Stuarts and Bourbons proved alike irreclaimable, and alike demonstrated that by no intermediate compromise could feudal prepossessions be made to amalgamate with the new civilisation.

A failure in the milder ordeal among our neighbours marked the commencement of the reign of William IV. France during fifteen years had been trying a constitutional government under a restored Bourbon, and the whole term had proved one of reciprocal mistrust, jealousy, and strife between the sovereign and the people. Louis XVIII. was a mild voluptuary, inclined to moderation, and enacted the part of our Charles II.; but his successor, Charles X., was a bolder, less astute, and more bigoted prince, who after the example of our King James, challenged and met the fate he recklessly provoked. The Charter, which his predecessor had given to the nation, he cast to the winds; and by one upward leap from a constitutional monarch to a despot, sought to rule, not according to the law, but his own arbitrary will, fulminated in royal ordinances. Against this monstrous aggression the united community rose as one man, and after three days of heroic insurrection drove the audacious usurper from his palace and dominions.

This memorable example of popular justice was electric. It astonished and moved Europe. Sympathisers appeared in every capital, and news of the successful rising of Paris had scarcely reached London, ere a second peal sounded from Brussels. The union between Belgium and Holland in 1815, by which the new kingdom of the Netherlands had been formed, was one of the fruits of the Vienna Congress, in which political relations were considered rather than national identities. The consolidated communities were adverse; unlike in language

habits, interests, and religion. The Belgians held the alliance to be forced; they resolved to sever it, and encouraged by the example of the Parisians, they over-powered the military and became masters of the city. The struggle was a protracted one, but finally issued in the erection of Belgium into a separate kingdom. But the general movement did not stop in the Low Countries; it extended to the German states, to Prussia, Saxony, Poland, and Italy. In Brunswick and Saxony the reigning princes either resigned their authority, or fled. The Polish legions revolted in mass against the capricious tyranny of the viceroy, the Archduke Constantine; made themselves masters of Warsaw; and were only subdued after bloody battles with the overwhelming hordes of Russia.

The impulse was felt in England, and aggravated the unpopularity of the Wellington administration, especially as the ducal premier was suspected, though unjustly, of complicity with the tiger-spring of the French king. But the ministry was weak from isolation—from loss of the support of the anti-catholic section of Tories, and being dependent for continuance in office on the voluntary co-operation of the Opposition, with whom it was not in accordance on most questions of domestic and foreign policy. The death of George IV., and the occurrences of the parliamentary session which had preceded it, increased the divergence between the minister and his auxiliaries. It was evident the premier was not disposed to advance much further with his Whig allies, while they pressed upon him the need of an unfaltering progression in his reformatory career. The country was in difficulties, and Sir James Graham truly urged, that it was only in moments of distress that useful measures could be carried. Acting on this principle the baronet made motions, supported by eloquent speeches, for returns of

the salaries of privy councillors*, and for returns of the expenses of diplomatic missions ; all which were negatived by large majorities. Two motions for parliamentary reform, by Lord John Russell, shared the like fate. These ministerial negatives evinced that the fund of liberalism in the cabinet was exhausted ; that further popular concessions were not to be expected ; and the Whigs availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the commencement of a new reign, and consequent dissolution of parliament, to dissolve the ducal alliance, and withdraw from a government in which they had not officially participated.

This defection was not the only difficulty with which the ministry had to grapple. The experience and abilities of its chief proved unequal to the task of civil government ; and the Catholic Relief Act, and some other measures, were known to have been compulsory, not voluntary concessions. Hence he lacked the national confidence, and failed to reap due thanks or gratitude for laudable acts. Moreover, all Tories were in discredit by the progress of popular information. For twenty years the abuses in public institutions, chartered companies, the church establishment, in charitable foundations, the management of the public revenue and crown revenues, had been a constant subject of exposure by Mr. Brougham, Mr. Creevy, Sir H. Parnell, Mr. Hume, Mr. Harvey, and others. It was discovered and shown that the government had not fulfilled its legitimate purposes ; that it had been carried on more for the benefit of the administrators than the community ; that public services were extravagantly, unequally, or inadequately paid ; that public money was squandered in the maintenance of sinecures and un-

* May 14. 1830.

deserved pensions ; and that peer and commoner, their relatives and dependants, participated in the general corruption. Even the ministry of the Duke of Wellington had not been free from the opprobrium of its predecessors. Official patronage was abused, and cabinet ministers were found creating offices, and putting their sons into them, and then abolishing the offices, and receiving in lieu compensation-pensions.*

Amidst these exposures in parliament and the country, and simultaneously with the revolutionary explosions in the continental capitals, parliament was dissolved, July 24. 1830. The popular voice was against the prime minister, and by the Whigs he had been deserted ; and the nation was elated with joy at so many triumphs over despotism. All the surviving horrors of the first French Revolution seemed to be effaced by the magnanimity of the second : even the property-classes became enamoured of popular commotions ; and those who did not share in the gladness inspired by passing events incurred dislike, almost execration. The minister and his colleagues were suspected of want of sympathy, and generally shunned : in the counties and populous boroughs they had no chance ; even the universities turned their backs upon them as pro-catholics : they could hardly find seats in the nomination boroughs, the chief Whig and Tory proprietors being opposed to them. The state of national feeling is evinced by the return of members for the two leading counties ;—Mr. Brougham for Yorkshire, and Mr. Hume for Middlesex.

The new parliament met November 2nd, and was opened by an unpopular royal speech. It said nothing about parliamentary or other reforms ; a disappointment aggravated by the abrupt declaration of the premier.

* See Sir R. Heron's Motion, Sess. 1830, March 26.

Sensible, from the result of the elections, that the end of his ministerial career was at hand, he seemed disposed to hasten it by his own violence, and, in the discussion on the address, boldly affirmed that reform was unnecessary, and that while he continued at the head of the government no measure of that character should be introduced. In the existing state of political feeling the effect was immense; it stirred those not usually prominent in politics; and the unanimous feeling was, that the arrogant interdict even of the Waterloo victor should not be held paramount to the united wishes of the nation. In the metropolis the excitement was such, that a complimentary visit intended to be paid in the city on Lord Mayor's Day, by their Majesties, was postponed from an apprehension of popular commotion.* All that had been previously surmised of the duke's unfitness for civil government seemed orally confirmed by himself; and on the 15th he was formally deposed, in the accustomed way, by a majority of the House of Commons voting against him. Next day brought the glad tidings of his resignation.

The dissolution of the Wellington ministry terminated the executive supremacy of the Tories. Divisions among themselves, from partial conversions to the policy of the

* In the agitated state of the public mind the Duke of Wellington apprehended riot and perhaps bloodshed, and, from motives of humanity, advised the postponement of the royal visit. "If firing had begun," said he, "who could tell where it would end? I know what street-firing is: one guilty person would fall, and ten innocent be destroyed. Would this have been wise or humane, for a little bravado, or that the country might not have been alarmed for a day or two." (*Sir William Knighton's Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 182.) Private letters had been addressed to the duke by the city solicitor, and the lord mayor elect, recommending to him that he should enter the city "strongly and sufficiently guarded." His grace adopted the safer and wiser alternative of stopping away.

Whigs, with unavoidable concessions to popular demands, had portended during the preceding eight or ten years the decline of their exclusive domination. With only short intermissions, they had conducted the government of the country since the formation of the North ministry in 1770; during that long term every branch of the public administration had been graduated to their maxims, and saturated with their adherents, and nothing save a concurrence of favourable circumstances and a necessity palpable and urgent would have been adequate to dislodge a power so firmly rooted and widely ramified. The dilapidating effects of time and neglect had become apparent in the primary, secondary, and cognate branches of administration. Inequalities and abuses were not more rife in ecclesiastical, civil, and judicial offices, than in the great municipal and mercantile corporations of the kingdom. Under a pertinacious system of non-inquiry and non-reform, the gangrene of disorder had spread through the entire frame, and a new anatomy of parts, not less than new blood, had become essential to a regeneration of the body politic.

The most vitiated part of the system was unquestionably the representative. Engrossed by the pressing dangers of popery and arbitrary power, this had been left untouched at the Revolution of 1688. Time had augmented its deformities, and shown more glaringly the severance of property and intelligence from political power and responsibility; till at length it had degenerated into a mere mockery, obvious to the minds of all by the ludicrous contrast of Old Sarum and Gatton with representatives, — Birmingham and Manchester without a voice. By nomination boroughs, close corporations, and the peculiarities of the county franchise, only one interest was substantially incorporated in the legislature. Land was omnipotent; commerce, manufactures, shipping,—all that had

created the material greatness and opulence of the realm, — were dumb, or only stealthily heard from a few stray organs, or the less recognised channels of the public press, or occasional public meetings. An oligarchy ruled ; and it is needless to say that the laws it made, the measures it supported, and those it proscribed, savoured of the character, the interests, and prejudices of their authors. Parliamentary reform, even before the French Revolution intervened, had been deemed the sovereign specific, and had only been deferred by the anti-catholic riots of Lord George Gordon. By patriotic and enlightened men, not blinded by selfishness or morbid apprehensions, it was deemed the sole corrective of the constitution ; and Sir George Saville, Wyvile, William Pitt, Charles Grey, and Lord John Russell, are distinguished names who successively took charge of the state elixir, till it was finally adopted under the auspices of a beneficent monarch.

In addition to the favourable incidents from the co-operation of king, ministers, and people in one direction, animated in their course by the excitement of the continental revolutions, were others that tended to weaken opposition to constitutional changes, and produce more unanimity among those classes which had the wish and the power to effect them. These were in the total abeyance of the wild impracticabilities of social and political reform which had agitated the country during the five years subsequent to the peace. Neither the church, the constitution, nor property was felt to be jeopardised by the progress of reform under its present conductors. The political effervescence which had prevailed from 1815 to 1821 had subsided ; the advocates of universal suffrage and annual parliaments had met with so little encouragement that they lost all hope, and had ceased to petition the legislature. In 1822 the number of

petitions in favour of reform had fallen to twelve; in 1824 there was no petition at all; and the same was the case in 1825, 1826, 1827, and 1829.* The opportunity long desired now offered, and the arena was clear for the advancement of equitable and feasible claims, supported by the intelligence and leading material influences of the community.

The ministry of Earl Grey was formed in November, 1830. Public opinion imperatively marshalled the way, and fortunately there was no intention of deviating into any by-path. Those members of the cabinet who had not, like the head of the government, always been Reformers, were converted, or acquiesced under the pressure of existing circumstances. The king himself had consented to the introduction of a measure of reform. On this condition, office had been accepted by his new advisers, who declared, immediately on taking the reins of power, the terms of their administration to be, "Peace abroad, reform and retrenchment at home." These pledges were faithfully redeemed; and, as respects their first, greatest measure of Parliamentary Reform, they applied themselves directly to the removal of the public malady, which they correctly appreciated, and, like bold and skilful physicians, cut out the cancer which had for ages preyed on the vitals of the constitution, and took all the precautions they could, commensurate with public intelligence and their own power, to guard against its reproduction.

Their first aim was to augment popular control, conformably to the altered relations in society of wealth and knowledge; and, by divesting the government of its irresponsible action, render the oligarchical interests heretofore predominant in the state, subordinate to those of the

* Mr. Croker, House of Commons, March 1. 1831.

commonweal. In the accomplishment of this organic change, their course was neither rash nor stinted, but conservative and progressive. No greater disturbance was given to existing institutions or interests than was essential to the general security; by which means the fears of the timid were allayed, and the demands of the moderate and rational satisfied. They sought to reform within not without the pale of the constitution. In this spirit the ballot, which was included in the first draft of the Reform Bill, drawn by the Earl of Durham, was rejected, as extraneous and inapplicable to the evils complained of, namely, the nomination boroughs, non-representation of the large towns, inequalities in the elective franchise, and the delay and corruptions of elections. That the scheme of the Reform Ministers was bold and honest, as well as discreet; that it was proportioned to the emergency; or, if defective, that its errors or deficiencies were shared by them in common with the nation, is attested by the fact, still vividly remembered, that its first introduction was hailed with an unanimous burst, from Reformers of every degree, of surprise, gratitude, and thankfulness. The entire country, at one critical moment of jeopardy, seemed ready to imperil its existence for the carrying of the "bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill;" while, on the other hand, the Oligarchs, whose monopoly and misrule it was meant to foreclose, stood aghast at its uprooting tendency, and, forgetting their divisions, they at once united against the common enemy, that threatened for ever to extinguish their ascendancy.

Under these political aspects was the Parliamentary Reform Bill introduced by Lord John Russell, March 1. 1831, in an able address, remarkable for accuracy and research. He pointed out the defects of the representa-

tive system, and proposed an extensive disfranchisement of small boroughs, and the enfranchisement of the large towns, with an increase in the number of county members. In boroughs, the elective franchise was to be extended to householders paying a 10*l.* rental; in counties, to copyholders of 10*l.* a year, and leaseholders of 50*l.* per annum. Persons already in possession of the right of voting not to be disfranchised, if actually resident. By increased facilities for taking the poll, the duration of elections was to be greatly shortened. No compensation was to be given to the proprietors of the disfranchised boroughs, which was justified under the precedent of the forty-shilling freeholders of Ireland, who had received no compensation. The bill was read a first time without a division, after an animated discussion that lasted seven days. The second reading was carried, after a debate of two days, by a majority of ONE, the numbers being 302 to 301. The chief objections against the bill were, that it was based on population, without reference to property, or the payment of taxes; and that it reduced the number of members. An amendment was moved, that the number of members ought not to be diminished; it was carried against ministers, who were also defeated upon a motion of adjournment. These discomfitures preluded a resistance fatal to the bill in its entirety, and ministers tendered their resignation, which the king declined to accept. They next recommended that parliament should be dissolved, to which his Majesty assented, and promptly executed, expressly for taking the sense of the people on the Reform Bill.

The influence of popular feeling was forcibly exemplified in the elections. The Reform Bill had passed a second reading in an unreformed House of Commons, chosen under the Wellington ministry. In the fresh ap-

peal to the nation, popular enthusiasm proved still more triumphant, and the opponents to the ministerial measure succumbed on all sides, except in the universities, where church authority is dominant. In London, Dublin, and Edinburgh pledged supporters of the bill were returned. It was nearly the same with the counties; only the six smaller counties returned opponents; and the stirring zeal of the people proved more than a match for the anti-bill proprietors of the boroughs, even in the existing defective state of the franchise.

Upon the meeting of the new parliament, the Reform Bill was again introduced. It was read a second time July 4. 1831, after an elaborate debate of three nights, in which Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. Macaulay, Lord Althorp, the Bulwers, and Sir F. Burdett shone conspicuous. For the second reading 367, against 231. It was next committed, and underwent a long, severe, but beneficial scrutiny; every clause was carefully discussed, imperfections discovered and remedied. These labours occupied the house till the 19th of September, when, on the third reading, there was another eloquent display, and the bill was carried by 345 to 236. In the House of Lords, the bill had to undergo a still more searching ordeal. On October 3. Earl Grey moved the second reading in a comprehensive address, in which he traced the growth of the spirit of reform, its present irresistible power, concluding by defending the leading points of the measure. A memorable debate followed. For skill, force, and variety of argument; for historical, constitutional, and scholastic illustration, it had never been surpassed in parliamentary history. That some reform had become necessary was generally conceded; but the reform submitted was held to be adverse to the landed interest, and subversive of the power of the crown and the peerage.

Great temper was evinced in the discussion, and both sides of the noble assembly maintained their opinions with the dignified consciousness of rectitude of intention. The debate lasted five nights, when the house divided,—158 in favour, and 199 against the bill. Its rejection produced a strong and indignant feeling, and serious riots ensued at Bristol, Nottingham, and Derby. Supported, however, as the bill was by the crown, the House of Commons, and the people, there was general confidence in its ultimate success; and the eventful year, in which so much of it had been anxiously passed, was not allowed to close before the bill was again in parliament.

Upon the reassembling of the legislature after prorogation, Lord John Russell, November 12., for the third time brought forward the Reform Bill, remarking that government was pledged not to produce a less efficient measure than the former; but that, as population had been objected to as the sole basis of representation, it had been sought to combine numbers with property and taxation. The effect of these alterations was to lessen the number of the boroughs to be disfranchised, and to maintain the full number of 658 members. So amended the bill passed its second reading by a majority of exactly two to one. It was nearly two months in committee, and did not leave the Commons till March 19. 1832, when the third reading was carried by 355 to 239. April 2., after a debate of four days, it was read a second time in the Lords, and carried by 184 to 175. Subsequent to the Easter recess Lord Lyndhurst moved to postpone the consideration of the disfranchising clauses of the bill till the enfranchising clauses had been passed; and the motion was carried against ministers. It was obviously intended by the learned lord to be the first of a series of obstructions, to delay or mutilate if not

destroy the national scheme ; and, upon this construction, ministers forthwith resigned. A week of vehement agitation followed, to compel the passing of the bill in an unmutilated shape. In the Commons a resolution was adopted expressive of confidence in the Whig ministers, and regret at their resignation. Out of doors the country was in a menacing state of unanimity. The tide set all in one direction. With hardly an exception the newspapers were on the popular side, and kept up a raking fire against the "Oligarchy" and "usurping Borough-mongers." In London, Birmingham, Manchester, and other large towns, simultaneous meetings were held to petition the House to stop the supplies. In the metropolis placards were exhibited enjoining union, an enforcement of the public rights at all hazards, and a general resistance to the payment of taxes, tithes, and rates. The numerous political societies were in active communication, and at their meetings and in the leading journals projects for organising and arming the people were openly discussed and recommended. In case of need the population of Birmingham and other large towns was ready to proceed to the aid of the metropolis.

Amidst these threatening indications attempts were made to form a new ministry. But though the king sought new councillors, it was on the express condition that "an extensive reform" should be effected. Under this limitation Lord Lyndhurst was commissioned. The Duke of Wellington, from motives of loyalty as he explained them*, was disposed to lend his aid in the royal emergency ; but Sir Robert Peel was more untractable. He had strenuously opposed the Reform Bill ;

* House of Lords, May 17. 1832.

he had no hope of modifying it so as to be both satisfactory to himself and the majority of the House of Commons; therefore, out of regard to his own consistency, he declined, though tempted with the premiership, to cooperate with the duke in any endeavour to form an administration on the basis the king had prescribed. Upon this failure the Whig ministers were recalled.

Ministers did not return to office without obtaining an assurance from the king that his cooperation would, if needed, not be wanting to carry the Reform Bill. Both parties had evinced a desire not to resort to the extreme measure of an enormous addition to the peerage; but all other means the constitution offered had been tried, and found insufficient. The people had been appealed to by a dissolution of parliament; a large majority of their representatives had passed the bill; the king was favourable to it; an attempt to form an anti-reform ministry had miscarried; only one obdurate branch of the legislature withheld the aggregate will; therefore, now was the juncture, now was the necessity, in order to carry on the government of the country, when the prerogative of the crown might be legitimately exercised. Without this exercise of regal power—which, like Goliath's sword, ought not to be brought out save on urgent occasions—the constitution would have been in abeyance, the duties of the executive obstructed, and the internal peace of the empire endangered. Instead of a government of King, Lords, and Commons, it would have degenerated into a government of Lords alone, in defiance of the two other estates of the realm, supported by the loudly-expressed voice of the people.

The king's resolve having become known, its execution was averted. Rather than have their lustre dimmed,

and collective power diluted by an addition of about 100 to their number, the refractory peers, in obedience to the royal wish, conveyed to them in a circular*, absented themselves from the House, and the Reform Bill was carried in silence and solitude, through its remaining stages encountering merely a formal opposition. The royal assent was given to the bill June 7th, and an end put to the political suspense and excitement, which had existed to an intense degree since the dissolution of the Wellington ministry at the close of 1830. The Reform Bills for Scotland and Ireland, and the bills for dividing the counties, and for fixing the parliamentary boundaries of the cities and boroughs, were completed before the end of the session. On the 16th of August parliament was prorogued, and did not again meet. It was dissolved December 3rd, and the remainder of that month was occupied in the first general election under the new system of representation. Practice did not belie anticipation; the quiet and dispatch of the elections contrasting favourably with the fifteen days' riot and licentiousness of antecedent appeals. By excluding non-resident voters,

* The date of the subjoined missive, addressed to the peers, by the king's private secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, will show the time when the great state screw in possession of the crown was applied to the Upper Chamber.

"St. James's Palace, May 17. 1832.

"**MY DEAR LORD**,—I am honoured with his Majesty's commands to acquaint your Lordship, that all difficulties to the arrangements in progress will be obviated by a declaration in the house to-night, from a sufficient number of peers, that, in consequence of the present state of affairs, they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it may pass without delay, and as nearly as possible in its present state.

"I have the honour to be, yours sincerely,

"**HERBERT TAYLOR.**"

by limiting the duration of the poll to two days (since reduced to one), and increasing the number of polling places, the expenses of candidates were lessened, and additional facilities afforded to voters.

Like philosophers, statesmen ought to be judged by the standard of their own time, not by the exigencies of a future age. For the period the Reform Act was a just, comprehensive, and energetic conception. For names it substituted realities ; for prescriptive rights, that had become hurtful or dead, it created living interests. All were not made direct partakers of its benefits, but all were made equally eligible to them ; there was no disqualification. Its leading purpose was circumscription of the aristocratic power, which had been perverted to exclusive ends, by its transfusion into the democracy, which had risen into competence and supremacy. Legislative authority was vested in the nation ; and the nation, when it thinks fit, can constitutionally exercise it. The difference in the action of public opinion before and after the Reform Act is great and distinctive. It had long been potent : it triumphed over the Stuarts ; at the Orange revolution of 1688 it was present ; it often controlled the factions under the Georges, and even succeeded in returning a reform parliament under a Tory ministry. But its impulses were precarious or irregular ; too sudden or dilatory ; sometimes violent and revolutionary ; rarely deliberative, and always illegitimate. These defects the parliamentary charter remedied, by establishing a safe and recognised channel for the conveyance of the public sentiment. No interest was left, though perhaps not in just proportion incorporated, without its representative organ. In tranquil times in the absence of gross abuse or misgovernment, the representative organs may be mute, relaxed, or quiescent ;

they may be like river-beds in summer, empty, dry, or inert; but let oppression or imbecility become apparent in rulers, and their latent energies are roused into action; and no minister, however reckless or unprincipled, can neglect the demonstration.

As might be expected, the first Reformed Parliament consisted of a large majority of the party by whom it had been created, and was composed of 400 ministerialists, 150 Tories, or Conservatives; the residue consisted of independents, radicals, and Irish repealers. It commenced its labours by some salutary regulations for extending the hours, and facilitating the modes of transacting parliamentary business. A session of splendid legislation next opened, unsurpassed in utility, justice, and practical wisdom by any representative assembly on record. There was a manifest indisposition to entertain questions involving further organic changes, especially as those under which the Commons itself had assembled remained untried; but all the great topics on which public opinion had been expressed and matured were resolutely grappled with, elaborately discussed, and satisfactorily adjusted. Ireland, its internal peace, and church establishment; the East India Company, the renewal of its charter, the opening of its trade with China, and the future government of our Oriental empire; the renewal of the charter of the Bank of England, and the connexion of its immunities with the state of banking and the currency; and the abolition of colonial slavery, formed engrossing subjects of debate and settlement.

The last exemplified a magnanimous spirit of justice and humanity. The African slave-trade had been abolished in 1807, and by a later statute, following the example of the United States, declared to be piracy; but the act of the present session abolished slavery itself in

the West Indies. The slaves were not at once declared free, which would have been precipitate, and tended to disorder; but their gradual emancipation was definitely prescribed. All children under six years of age, or born after August 1. 1834, were declared free; all registered slaves above six years became, from the same date, apprenticed labourers, divided in two classes; the term of apprenticeship of one class, namely, those employed in agriculture, expiring in 1838, and of the other class two years later. These terms of apprenticeship were anticipated, by the masters setting the negroes free before the expiration of them. The most difficult point to settle with the planters was the amount of compensation to be paid to them as the price of emancipation. At first a loan of fifteen millions was thought of, but this was deemed an inadequate equivalent; and subsequently the loan was transmuted into a gift of twenty millions, by which liberal donation Mr. Secretary Stanley said the whole scheme would be made acceptable, and ensure the cordial cooperation of the proprietors and colonial legislatures.

The government of Hindostan formed a more important subject of legislation than the preceding, affecting a population of 100 millions; whereas the slavery bill applied only to 800,000 blacks. But the Hindoo question excited less interest; it was viewed less as a moral than as a commercial issue; and the interests of commerce were at once guaranteed, by ministers conceding a free trade to China. The political government of India was continued to the Company for twenty years, upon condition of the Company abandoning commercial pursuits, and transferring to the government their effects and claims; the latter charging itself with the Company's pecuniary obligations, and paying to it an annual sum.

The renewal of the charter of the Bank of England,

its position in relation to the government, and to the currency of the realm, opened a wide field of inquiry and debate. The points upon which opinion was divided were, the expediency of maintaining the Bank as the governing monetary association of England, with certain exclusive privileges in the management of the public debt, in banking, and in the issue of its notes. To this policy the ministers were favourable; but the charter was not renewed with uncurtailed immunities, and certain liberties not before allowed were extended to private banks in drawing bills, and in the establishment of banks of deposit in London and its vicinity. The charge it made for the management of the public debt was reduced nearly one-half; but bank paper was made a legal tender, and equivalent to gold, for all payments above 5*l.*, except by the Bank itself, or its branches. From this period the Bank was required to publish a monthly return of its assets, and the issue of its notes; the latter obligation extending to the issues of the country banks.

The progress of reform steadily continued in succeeding sessions. Each year of the present reign was signalled by some important public improvement. The establishment of the Central Criminal Court abridged the term of imprisonment before trial, by monthly sessions at the Old Bailey, and greatly improved the administration of criminal justice in the metropolis. A more general and arduous measure occupied the attention of parliament in 1834, in framing an amended administration of the Poor Laws. Numerous errors had been engrafted on the great consolidation act of Queen Elizabeth, partly by the legislature itself, and partly by its magisterial and parochial administrators. These abuses had been an anxious subject of inquiry since the peace, and had been sought to be met by the institution of assistant overseers and

select vestries. It was not the principle of a compulsory assessment for the relief of the indigence inseparable from society which appeared so objectionable as its corrupt and wasteful disbursement. Wages had come to be paid partly out of the poor rates ; no efficient test was applied to distinguish between real and fictitious distress ; the rights of settlement were conflicting, and productive of expensive litigation ; the size of parishes was unequal, and unsuited to an economical and efficient administration ; the Bastardy Laws had an immoral tendency ; owing to the equality of suffrage in the ratepayers, the management of the poor frequently fell into the hands of incompetent or unprincipled persons, who perverted their authority to jobbing and selfish purposes. Under the operation of these causes the poor rates had increased in amount without proportionate benefit to the poor, who had been rendered refractory and discontented by the defective administration of laws intended for their relief and advantage. For the remedy of these evils a more centralised power was deemed expedient, and a board of three commissioners was appointed by the crown, authorised to reform and superintend the carrying out of the poor laws.

A most important improvement in the civil government of the kingdom was the reform of municipal corporations. These close and self-elected bodies had formed a subject of complaint for centuries. But any remedy of them was impracticable, while abuses in the representation were maintained. The venal boroughs, which were thrown open by the Reform Act, were the chief seats of corporation abuse ; and the correction of the local evil would have been the virtual destruction of the system by which the aristocracy of Whigs and Tories had maintained its political ascendancy. Impunity being thus

secured for the parliamentary boroughs, it sheltered the comparatively insignificant abuses of the non-parliamentary ones. But the extension of the representative franchise to ten-pound householders, and extending their local limits, deprived of their chief value the municipal boroughs that had degenerated into an appanage of the peerage or private persons. The decayed boroughs of Scotland had been purified in the first session of the Reformed Parliament, by vesting the election of magistrates and town-councils in the ten-pound householders; and a similar popular principle of regeneration was extended to England in 1835. In place of self-elected and self-auditing bodies, a local administration was substituted, responsible to the ratepayers, and a provision made for extending the system, if desired by the inhabitants, to Manchester, Birmingham, and other unincorporated towns.

The next year was memorable for strenuous endeavours in Ecclesiastical meliorations. The vexatious right of exacting tithes in kind was commuted into a corn rent-charge, payable in money according to the value of a fixed quantity of corn as yearly ascertained by the average of the preceding seven years. By this settlement of conflicting interests, the chief practical objection to the impost as being a tax on outlay of capital and improvement of the soil, and the right of the tithe-owner to increase his demands in proportion to the augmented value of the produce of the land, was extinguished. The Marriage Act was partly a measure of church reform. It was a general concession, but obviated a special grievance of the Dissenters. Instead of all persons of whatever persuasion being forced, as previously, in order to be legally married, to comply with the ritual of the Established Church, they were made free to marry with any religious ceremony

they might prefer, or without any religious ceremony ; the nuptial contract might be a civil engagement only, entered into by a public declaration of the marriage before the superintendent registrar.

The reforms in the Church were preceded by an extensive inquiry by a royal commission into the amount and disposition of ecclesiastical patronage and revenues. Returns having been obtained and published of the incomes of the bishops, dignitaries, and parochial clergy, it led to a reduction in revenue and new arrangement of episcopal sees, and a better disposition of the capitular estates of cathedrals and collegiate churches. The Church of Ireland was subjected to a similar ordeal of inquiry and amendment. These were followed, early in the next reign, by acts for the improvement of church discipline, the enforcement of residence, and the curtailment of pluralities.

The enlightened spirit of reform, which operated so beneficially in improving the domestic institutions of the country, was extended to its Foreign Policy. Almost for the first time on record, England and France acted in concert without jealousy or mistrust. Both nations had recently undergone great internal changes ; but France, by the acceptance of a new sovereign, in the person of Louis-Philippe, the abolition of an hereditary peerage, and the establishment of the plan of popular education framed by M. Guizot, had outstripped England in social progress and constitutional innovations. In the external policy of the two kingdoms there was unity of purpose ; of both, the aim was the maintenance of peace among nations ; but, constitutional themselves, they naturally inclined to the support of constitutional power in other countries. Acting on this principle, they seconded the claims of Donna Maria, in preference to those of Don

Miguel in Portugal, and those of Isabella II. to those of Don Carlos in Spain; but neither government alarmed the fears of other states by an armed intervention. A subject of greater interest than the fratricidal contests in the Peninsula was the accomplishment of an amicable divorce between Belgium and Holland, the difficulties of which were augmented by the decided aversion of one of the betrothed parties to a separation. At the outset a suspension of hostilities was enforced between the belligerents, and next the terms of future peace and severance prescribed. In these terms Holland refused to acquiesce, and the necessity arose of enforcing submission to the award by arms. Novel events followed. The combined English and French fleets, so often arrayed against each other, peaceably mingled their flags in the Channel, the Scheldt was blockaded, and a French army under Marshal Gerard rapidly penetrated to Antwerp, and after a brisk bombardment of the citadel, quietly put the Belgians in possession of the disputed fortress, and then withdrew into the French territory. These form examples of mediation, by which international quarrels are settled and peace maintained, of which there are few instances in the history of European diplomacy, and the useful character of which has been before adverted to.* A similar friendly office in the same year of 1833 was rendered by the allied powers to Turkey in saving her from her rebel vassal, Mehemet Ali, in lieu of leaving the Sultan to the tender mercies of the Czar, whose auxiliary aid might have proved as fatal to the Ottoman empire as Russia's occupation of Warsaw to Poland.

The spirit and composition of the Reform Ministry underwent severe trials pending its successful adminis-

* *Antè*, p. 475.

tration of national affairs. As early as 1834, it began to feel the necessity of not implicitly yielding to the outward pressure which had raised it to power, and mainly supported it in its reformatory career. Doubtless great evils require great remedies.—

“ And whirlwinds fittest scatter pestilence.”

But the popular storm having swept away the larger masses of abuse, it seemed desirable that both the executive and parliament should subside into more tranquil channels, and be urged onward with less impetuosity. The removal of the more palpable grievances of the boroughs, corporations, and commercial and monetary monopolies had been effected without encountering formidable resistance; but it was a nicer and more difficult task to deal with matters involving complicated and more equally balanced interests, or respecting which the general opinion was less unanimous: to grapple with these time and deliberation were requisite; and these could hardly be reckoned upon so long as the government continued to be hurried onward by an external agency more remarkable for impulsive force than a just appreciation of the obstacles to be surmounted. Accordingly, ministers sought to separate themselves from the impatient and irregular auxiliaries with whom they had heretofore kept up an interchange of civilities. The Tories had been defeated, if not humbled; and the Indian war-whoop was no longer necessary to alarm them into further concessions. Downing Street, in consequence, became less accessible to the inroads of the leaders of political unions and parochial deputations; and even the representative organs of the Dissenters were given to understand, that though their civil grievances would be

redressed, a firm resolve existed to maintain intact the Established Church.

The conservative spirit which had been awakened in a section of the cabinet first became apparent on the question of the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church, whether to ecclesiastical or secular purposes. A majority of the ministers and of the House of Commons was in favour of a lay appropriation; but a minority of the cabinet dissenting from this principle, and holding that ecclesiastical property could only be justly applied to ecclesiastical purposes, being unable to acquiesce in the legislative basis adopted by their colleagues, withdrew from the administration. The rupture from this disagreement with Sir James Graham, Mr. Stanley, the Earl of Ripon, and the Duke of Richmond was speedily followed by the retirement of the noble premier himself. All the pledges Earl Grey had given at the commencement of his patriotic ministry had been faithfully, and beyond public expectation, redeemed. Reform, peace, and retrenchment had crowned its exertions, and the minister having now passed his seventieth year, he naturally sought to be relieved of the responsibilities of government. His lordship's resignation had been preceded by that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had retired on account of the Irish Coercion Bill, but who consented to resume office under the premiership of Viscount Melbourne.

Before the close of the year, the ministry was again disorganised. It arose out of the death of Earl Spencer, and consequent removal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Upper House. This change had been foreseen and provided for; but the acceptance by Lord Althorp of an office compatible with his peerage, not withdrawal from the ministry, was the contingency calculated upon.

His lordship had been represented by Earl Grey, and was so considered by his successor, Lord Melbourne, as the mainstay of the government in the House of Commons. Upon these grounds, the king concluded that Lord Althorp was so essential an element of the ministry that they would, in consequence of his retirement, be unable to carry on the government, and they were abruptly dismissed. Rumour also ascribed to the king a dislike of the ministerial plans of church reform, and which he had evinced on the reception of an address* from the Irish prelates, deprecating ecclesiastical innovations. No other abiding reason has been assigned for the dissolution of the Melbourne cabinet. It was a sudden impulse of the royal mind, and appeared to the public more like one of those unexpected revolutions that occur in the palace of a despot, than the act of a constitutional monarch. The leading Tories had no share in producing it, though they were summoned, in the person of their chief, to fill up the vacancy. But the Duke of Wellington declined the premiership in favour of Sir Robert Peel, who was in Italy, and provisionally accepted the four principal state offices until his arrival in England.

The return of the Tories to power caused an intense public excitement. It was considered the prelude to a reaction. All the Reform Acts had accomplished, and were expected to accomplish, was considered in peril. The apprehension felt, however, was not, nor, it would seem, was it intended to be realised. The spirit of progress had been imbibed by the ministry which was formed under Sir R. Peel; and in lieu of being retrograde, it announced a disposition to follow the example of its predecessors, by submission to the national will, as expressed by a par-

* Presented May 28. 1834.

liamentary majority. Resistance to reform was not attempted on the basis it was wont to be urged by the party of Mr. Canning, namely, that any concession to the popular demands was pregnant with inappreciable danger, which ought never to be submitted to as an amendment, only as a diversion from more fundamental changes in the constitution. The new minister solicited public confidence, on the ground that he was friendly to change, to improvement — had given proofs of it by his Currency Bill, and reforms of the criminal law — and these, on his appeal to the people, he tendered in earnest of his future intentions. By the dissolution of Parliament, the Conservatives obtained an increase of nearly one hundred members ; but even this accession of strength left them in a minority of fifty. The Opposition, however, was in no hurry to remove them by a direct vote of want of confidence. Sir R. Peel was allowed to bring forward his leading measures, which he did with great despatch and ability. As the ministerial plans for the relief of Dissenters and the settlement of tithes were liberal, they were supported, and all went on harmoniously until Mr. Ward's test was applied. This the Tories could not withstand. Secular appropriation appeared unjust, if not sacrilegious, and rather than be partners in the unholy crusade for applying the surplus wealth of the sinecure Irish church to the education of an indigent population, they fled from office.

Upon the restoration of the Melbourne cabinet the progress of reform was resumed. But one luminary of the first magnitude had failed to reappear in the ministerial constellation. Dislike on the part of William IV., with a similar feeling on the part of some of the ministers, seems to have been the chief reason why the great seal was placed in commission. But neither the king nor his

ministers committed themselves to any open avowal of aversion ; and the dazzling prize of the Chancellorship was long suspended, holding out a delusive hope, and so averting the dread ire of its former possessor.* Either this lure or innate propensity induced Lord Brougham to continue with unabated zeal his efforts to confer public benefits. Infringement of patent rights had long been a subject of complaint, and under his lordship's revision an act was passed for better securing the interests of patentees in their discoveries and inventions. Another ex-minister of comprehensive and energetic ability, Sir James Graham, rendered good service by judicious bills for the registry of merchant-seamen, and for manning the royal navy by voluntary enlistment unaided by impressment. A desire to meet popular demands was further evinced by the reduction of the stamp-duty on newspapers, which had long been urged as a likely means of diffusing information among the people.

In Ireland equal justice to classes was sought to be substituted for factious exclusion and oppression. The Orange Lodges had long been the bane of the country, by obstructing the action of an enlightened course of government. The vigilance of Mr. Hume discovered that these intolerant associations had extended, with Jesuitical zeal, their ramifications into England and the colonies, and insinuated their lodges even into the army. The in-

* Lord Brougham wrote a letter to the king to mollify his resentment. (*Life of Lord Langdale*, p. 413.) It is stated on the same authority that Lord Melbourne sounded his majesty on the re-appointment of the ex-chancellor, but the latter evaded by stating that it was his (the minister's) duty to name the person he thought most fit. (*Ibid.*) Where the chief blame rested does not clearly appear ; but " never more shalt thou be a servant of mine " seems to have been the common understanding.

quiries of a parliamentary committee and the condemnatory resolutions of the House of Commons arrested this disturbing mischief. Catholicism ceased to be a bar, practically as well as legally, to judicial honours and civil offices. These, with other concessions, were accepted by O'Connell and his confederates in agitation as pledges of progressive amelioration, if not conclusive settlement of Irish grievances. Much had been effected, and a tranquil confidence began to exist that the remaining instalments due to a neglected country would ere long be forthcoming. The successive legislative efforts already made to extend education to all sects and parties; to reform the magistracy, grand juries, constabulary, and police; and to improve internal communications by means of rivers, bridges, and railways, afforded indubitable evidence of vigilance and purpose to advance the true interests of the sister kingdom.

In England constitutional agitation had been suspended, if it had not ceased. The mutilation of some Irish bills, and the rejection of others by the House of Lords, gave rise to a temporary cry for the reform of the Peerage by the closer assimilation of it in spirit and constitution to the House of Commons. But the prevailing disposition appeared to be not to adventure upon further organic changes till the great ones already made had been more fully tried; and the reflective portion of the community, and the intelligent among the Radicals themselves, felt reluctant, by premature experiments, to endanger institutions of unquestionable utility for others likely to confer only doubtful or unimportant benefits. Under the influence of these considerations what was termed the "movement" was stayed. A second cause of quietude consisted in the absence of political partisan-

ship. The strength of the ministerialists was not in their numbers, but their measures, which occasionally won them auxiliary aid from all parties. All the old beacons of faction had been confused or displaced by the ample equalisation of civil and religious immunities, and those by whom they were sought hardly knew where to find them. Not only did the Whigs themselves, but the heads of other sections, Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Stanley, Sir James Graham, Hume, Warburton, and Grote, offer a favourable contrast to the profligate adventurers of Queen Anne's reign or the Georges, who rarely for a moment sacrificed party interests to the public good. By this approximation of parties, by the gravitation as to a centre of adjacent bodies, the nucleus of the Reform Ministry, though divested of some of its chief primitive elements, was enabled to continue to the end of the present reign its progressive career.

It is probable the Reform Era will be held forth hereafter as one of the most auspicious periods of British history, not only in relation to its political, but to its material progress. While vital reforms were being effected in public institutions, the condition of the people was unusually comfortable, from commercial prosperity, the abundance of employment, and the reduced prices of all articles of ordinary consumption. In some occupations there was certainly depression; among the handloom weavers, for instance, whose industry had been superseded by mechanical substitutions; and the agricultural classes did not participate equally with the manufacturing interests in the general affluence. In the benefits resulting from the low prices of clothing and food all participated; but the low price of wheat, which from 1830 to 1837, both inclusive, averaged only 55s. 3d. a quarter, discouraged the application of capital to land, so

that farm-labourers rather exceeded the demand, and their wages fell.

With the exception of the failure in the stimulus of high prices to rural enterprise, and which the augmented demand arising from increased consumption did not compensate, all the great branches of national industry were in rapid progress. In spite of the great development of the cotton trade in Lancashire, it still continued to expand, and its bounds seemed illimitable. It was the same in Yorkshire; in the woollen manufactures of Leeds and Huddersfield, the stuffs of Bradford and Halifax, the linens of Barnsley and Knaresborough, and the flannels of Dewsbury, they were all thriving. In the silk trade, in the hosiery and lace trades, in the pottery and iron districts of Staffordshire and Wales, the general condition was highly flourishing.

In the external commerce of the country a change may be noticed, though remarked upon at a period a little subsequent, by the late Sir William Molesworth.* It refers to the different state in which the products of manufacture are exported, and which had been in progress in former reigns. Foreigners have continued to receive in augmenting quantities our hardwares, cottons, woollens, and other textiles; but though the export of these has gone on increasing, the export of them in the raw state, or an intermediate stage of manufacture, has increased in a faster ratio. Thus the increase of the export of cotton and woollen yarns, and of raw iron and steel, has been at a greater percentage rate than the manufactured products. As another incident in foreign commerce, may be mentioned the establishment of the Prusso-Bavarian league called the Zollverein. It excited some jealousy in England, but without reason, since the regulations of the

* House of Commons, March 13. 1839.

union have proved chiefly fiscal, and limited to the removal of the custom duties which obstructed the transit of commodities through conterminous German states.

The uncommon prosperity of the country was temporarily arrested by the usual sequel of a Mercantile Reaction. The revulsion of 1836-7 had a similar origin, and was marked by similar characteristics as the one noticed twelve years previously (p. 630.), but its effects were more limited and less enduring than the overwhelming pecuniary desolation which signalised the crisis of 1825. The chief points of distinction between the two, were in the value of the lesson the former had taught in the curtailment of private credit, and the greater share overtrading and an unguaranteed system of banking had in producing the recoil of 1837. It was not limited to England, but extended with equal or greater violence to the United States, and on both sides of the Atlantic had the same common origin—*an inordinate thirst of gain*; in America sought to be realised by land-jobs and speculations in British produce; in this country from excess of exports, railway projects, and joint-stock companies, projected on every imaginable temptation.

The Reform era had one sombre accompaniment, in the number of individuals of eminence whose career terminated, and the works or lives of most of whom, as previously glanced at, had helped to characterise, and been principally spent in a more stormy period. Sir James Mackintosh, Jeremy Bentham, Sir Walter Scott, Godwin, Malthus, Coleridge, James Mill, Hazlitt, and William Cobbett, are some of the popular or distinguished names which had passed away on the eve of a new generation, made wiser and better, it is probable, by the experience and precepts of a foregone race. The elder Scott, brother of the celebrated Lord Chancellor Eldon, had

been also numbered among the dead. Sir William, or Lord Stowell as he had been ennobled, had lived through the varying scenes of almost a century—had been eighteen years a college tutor, occupied in training the intellect of the aristocracy in classical and historical knowledge—had mingled familiarly in the literary circle of Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds, and Edmund Burke—was long the dispensing oracle of Doctors' Commons in matrimonial affairs, and spent thirty years as Admiralty judge, accumulating riches from naval prizes, and elaborating into symmetry maritime law from the crude dicta of his predecessors. France had two deaths of distinguished characters, who had fixed epochs in her history,—that of **M. de Lafayette**, whose public life began with the revolution in America; and that of the **Abbé Sieyes**, the venerable artiste of political constitutions from the assembling of the famous **Tiers-Etat**, through the vivid scenes of the first National Assembly and the Reign of Terror up to the first instalment of the Napoleonic age.

The death of the Reform King closes the eventful calendar of mortality. William IV. expired of natural decay, in June 1837. He had been a good man and beneficent sovereign, but his virtues were rather those of private life than of the regal station. Instead of the disturbing passions and commanding faculties, which form the chief historical portraits, his merits were the unpretending and often less hurtful qualities which contribute to domestic comfort, social enjoyment, and personal friendship. His education, in common with that of his brothers and of George III., had been below the standard of the age in which he survived to act a part.* Notwithstanding defects of early culture, and natural gifts, his name is

* Letter of Sir William Taylor, private secretary of George III.

connected with a portion of British history over which the philanthropist may exult with the least alloy of dissatisfaction. The glories of successful warfare signalled the early sway of his immediate predecessor; the less melancholy triumphs of peace, that of King William. During the seven eventful years of his reign, England had been revolutionised without violence or spoliation. All her great foundations and authorities, save the national universities, had been reformed, or prepared for reformation, by a free and unshrinking investigation. The veil was rent asunder, and every establishment, whether ecclesiastical, judicial, official, or colonial, thrown open to the general gaze and scrutiny. Public institutions were sought to be based on their public utilities, and the corrupt or factitious supports which government had been wont to derive from Treasury boroughs, close corporations, commercial monopolies, vast and irresponsible patronage, and a lavish fiscal expenditure, were struck from under it. Public opinion was made supreme, and that opinion free and unfettered. Whoever could sway it, whether by desert, talent, truth, or illusive arts, became the ruling power of the State.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PROGRESS UNDER QUEEN VICTORIA.

Stability of the British Constitution. — Weakness of the Melbourne Ministry. — Questions of Ministerial Appointments in the Royal Household. — Settlement of Canada, and Consolidation of its Political Government. — Quintuple Alliance against the Egyptian Pacha. — War with the Chinese. — Disastrous Expedition into Afghanistan. — Affair of Scinde. — Defeat and Subjugation of the Sikhs. — British Policy in India ; the Government of Lord Dalhousie. — Annexation of Oude. — Act for the better Government of British India. — Domestic Occurrences ; the Welsh Riots, and Chartist Insurrection. — Sir Robert Peel's Ministry. — Free Trade Principle ; its Origin and Progress. — Reforms of the Tariff. — Schism among the Protectionists, and Resignation of the Peel Ministry. — Difficulties of the Whig Ministry ; its Extension of commercial Freedom to the Colonies. — Repeal of the Navigation Laws, and opening of the Coasting Trade. — Progress of Liberalism.

THE two preceding reigns had been eminently progressive ; that of George IV. by the abolition of the religious disqualifications of the Roman Catholics and Dissenters ; that of William IV. by the political enfranchisement of the people, and the removal of obstructive municipal and commercial monopolies. In the brief reign of King William the foundations of the Constitution had been repaired, and those political and civil principles of freedom consummated which had been opened, and often ardently agitated during the eventful periods of George III. and his immediate successor. Together they closed the Georgian era ; and by the last two sovereigns dying without issue, and the sceptre descending to a female branch, the dynasty of the House of Brunswick seemed

to pause on the threshold of an unknown futurity. An illustrious princess, barely arrived at womanhood, had succeeded to the throne of the noblest empire of the world, in which all was new,—institutions, maxims of rule, and even social, moral, and religious ideas were in transition. But novelties had strengthened in lieu of impairing the fabric of the commonwealth; and the quiet accession of the young sovereign afforded a striking exemplification of the order and stability acquired by the imperial government.

The personal representative of the monarchy had been changed, but it had wrought no alteration or disturbance in the preexisting conditions of the state. No new hopes had been suddenly awakened into activity; political parties remained unaltered in their relations; no rival nor external power thought the moment more favourable for aggression, nor any colonial dependency or incorporated member of the realm for the severance of its allegiance. The king was dead, but the national government subsisted entire in its energies and capabilities. It offers a remarkable contrast to past epochs in the progress of the British constitution; and attests that it had acquired a power of self-action and perpetuity, independent of any mutation of its separate estates, even that of the sovereignty itself.

The executive administration of the empire shared in like immutability subsequent to the demise of the crown. Queen Victoria retained in office the responsible advisers of her predecessor. They were the remains of the compact ministry who carried, with the firm cooperation of William IV., the great reforms enumerated in the last reign; but the loss of former colleagues had greatly weakened them in parliamentary strength and public confidence. Except in good intentions, few of the vigo-

rous and capable elements of the primitive Reform Cabinet survived in the government. They struggled with other difficulties, which, with their accredited character in the appreciation of parties, were conflicting, —namely, of keeping awake conservative apprehensions if further progressive, or of neutralising or disappointing the expectations of adherents if apparently stationary or retrograde. Embarrassed by their peculiar position, and without the prestige or power of their primary organisation to command the national suffrages, they sought to supply the want of inherent strength and determinate purpose by wily and illusive arts, by a policy of procrastination, compromise, or inconsistency. Grave principles were announced and then abandoned, as the appropriation clause of the Irish Church Bill ; conflicting promises, alternately conservative or liberal, were hastily given, and speedily explained, qualified, or retracted ; class interests, and even individual agitators, if, like O'Connell, powerful, had to be consulted and conciliated ; measures deemed necessary and useful were not brought forward, or suddenly withdrawn, from despair of carrying them, as the reform of the Ecclesiastical Courts, and a General Registration Bill ; while others, like the Irish Municipal and Poor Law Bills, were suffered to be mutilated and misshapen, to neutralise opposition. Under these disadvantages the remnant of the Reform ministry sank in public estimation, ceased to be swayed by the intelligence it possessed, and became the mere creature of circumstance or sufferance.

Its relations were not improved by the assembling of the first parliament of the new reign,—the general election bringing it no commanding superiority in either branch of the Legislature. Sometimes it had a majority, but was often defeated, and frequently carried important measures

by only twenty, fifteen, or five votes. Official death would obviously have been preferable to such a dependent and precarious existence; and such apparently was its fate in 1839, when it was defeated in the Lords on the tenor of its Irish policy, and had only 318 against 296 in the Commons. Their Jamaica Bill was next rejected by the united opposition of Tories and Radicals. Upon this discomfiture, Lord Melbourne announced in the Upper House a fact long patent,— that the ministry did not appear to possess the confidence of parliament, and that they had resigned.

But an unexpected determination of the Queen arrested the popular judgment, and restored them to power. Her Majesty refused to dismiss the ladies of her household, considering them, probably, not politicians of any party. This, however, Sir Robert Peel made an indispensable concession ere he would undertake to form a new ministry; and the Queen, not acquiescing, and resorting to the advice of Lord John Russell, who approved her determination, the ministry was reinstated. A cabinet council mooted the point in dispute, and agreed that the constitutional usage of changing the servants of the royal household on a change of ministry, extended only to those who were members of parliament, not to ladies. Parliament appears to have acquiesced in the ministerial version of the prerogative, being doubtless reluctant, if dissentient, to press an adverse construction on a question so personal to the sovereign. It had the effect of prolonging the existence of the ministry for two years longer, though the votes of the Commons had designated its incompetence to administer the affairs of the nation.

Pending this prolonged term, the Executive had perplexing difficulties to encounter; which, though not amounting to national emergencies, demanded firmness

and capacity. The first requiring attention, were the disturbances in Lower Canada, which, under Papineau and Mackenzie, had assumed an insurrectionary if not rebellious character. But the feeble efforts of these insurgents soon yielded to the British power. The government of the United States observed an honourable neutrality, and by the end of 1840 all uneasiness ceased in respect of British North America. The suppression of this outbreak was supplemented by judicious concessions ; the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada being consolidated into one, under a joint political administration, and the class interests of the colony, the chief fount of discord, broken up by the free admission of French Canadians into the legislative council.

The next momentous stir was European, resulting from the quintuple alliance of England, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey ; concluded to check the ambitious encroachments of the pacha of Egypt. Emboldened by his successes in Syria in 1839, and the desertion to him of the Turkish fleet, the designs of Mehemet Ali menaced the integrity of the Ottoman empire. France stood aloof from the allies, and made demonstrations, as if intent on vigorously espousing the part of the insurgent pacha. The fortification of Paris by a circle of detached forts was suddenly projected, and her armies were proposed to be nearly doubled by her vainglorious minister. For a moment Europe appeared on the verge of a general war, on the single exotic question whether the Porte or its vassal should be supreme in the East. On one side the peril seemed awful ; on the other, the alternative sought to be averted, either by France or the Quintuple Alliance, was insignificant, unless under the remote contingency of France acquiring, by its new ally, predominance eastward. Otherwise it could weigh little in European

affairs, — could neither sensibly affect its economical interests nor political relations, — whether Egypt was subordinate or paramount; whether it continued a dependency of Constantinople, or became its chief; or whether the despot of the Nile or the despot of the Bosphorus were divided or consolidated sovereignties. In one direction the pacha's claim seemed preferable; his government was more progressive than that of the Sultan; and under him and his son Ibrahim, Oriental civilisation and resources were more likely to be brought out for the participation of Europe. However, Viscount Palmerston elected otherwise, and acted with such promptitude as to frustrate the counter-movements of M. Thiers. Before France could draw the sword, the business was settled; at St. Jean d'Acre the British navy evinced its wonted superiority, and, by a signal display of engineering power, promptly accomplished a feat in which Napoleon had failed in the pride of victory. It convinced the crafty Egyptian that resistance would be hopeless; and Mehemet Ali speedily yielded to all that had been demanded of him; consented to give up his conquests in the Levant, restore the Turkish fleet, and hold Egypt as a hereditary fief of Turkey.

Our embroilment with the Chinese had a not less successful issue; but was more afflictive in its origin and accompaniments. It was an unequal struggle. The energies and science of modern Europe, wielded by its most powerful state, were pitted against the military crudities of the fifteenth century. Moreover, our opponents, if a stationary, were a peaceful race, and their quarrel just. For commercial gain, and in defiance of the laws of the Celestial empire, we had long persisted in introducing a noxious drug, which poisoned and enervated its inhabitants. Imperial edicts against the

illicit traffic had proved unavailing, and the native authorities were constrained to try to make their power respected, by taking vengeance into their own hands. They seized the opium stores of the English, and imprisoned their chief functionaries. These coercive proceedings were insulting to Britain; uninitiated by negotiation, they were a violation of the established usages of civilised states. National honour demanded atonement and compensation. These were obtained after a pertinacious, but hopeless resistance. Pecuniary indemnification was granted for the loss of property by British merchants, guarantees given against future insults or injury in trade, with all the other conditions which the conquerors thought fit to impose on the humbled pride of a conceited people.*

The war with the Affghans, inhabiting a distant and rugged territory of North-West Hindostan, forms an eventful episode in the early reign of the Queen. It is also eminently instructive. History offers few more striking examples of retributive justice. Both belligerents did wrong, and the wrongs by each were visited with exemplary punishment. England appears to have had no valid pretext for the invasion of Affghanistan. Alleged Russian intrigues in Central Asia, dangerous to our Oriental supremacy, seem to have been only the sur-

* Twenty years before the Chinese were compelled to take our opium, Mr. Weeks, of Tichborne Street, indulged in a curious prediction to Mr. Rush, the American resident in this country. "One of these days," said Weeks, "England will oblige China to receive her wares by the strong arm of power." (*Residence at the Court of London in 1819—1825*, 2nd Series, vol. i. p. 34.) So it came to pass. But may not the hopes of the prophet have been father to his prediction, Mr. Weeks having accumulated an immense collection of ingenious mechanism, for which he only expected a remunerative opening in the Chinese market?

mises of meddling diplomatists, and were promptly disavowed by the court of St. Petersburg, and certainly not credibly established by the Indian authorities. But upon these conjectural grounds our aggressive inroad originated. Our scheme was to expel Dost Mohammed, the reigning sovereign at Cabool, who we imagined leaned to our phantom foe, and set up Shah Soojah, a puppet prince, intended to be wholly governed by British residents. With these designs Affghanistan was invaded, Ghuznee taken by storm, and its capital reached in heroic style; but there we soon ceased to have cause for exultation. We had rashly placed ourselves in a false position, from apprehension of a contingent danger, and overrun a remote and unoffending state. A severe retaliation followed our indiscretion. Indignant at our causeless inroad and arrogant demeanour in Cabool, the Affghans stopped at no violence or stratagem to effect our forcible expulsion. Some of our chief officers were killed in a popular tumult; others were inveigled into a conference by Akbar Khan, the son of Mohammed, and savagely assassinated. The British camp was environed by an overwhelming force, and its numbers thinned by daily attacks. Fearful of encountering the enemy in the open field from disparity of forces, and without hope of reinforcements, a capitulation was concluded for the evacuation of the country. This was in January, 1842, and the ground covered with snow. No sooner had the Anglo-Indian force left their camp, and entered the Khoord Pass, than the terms of cession were violated, and the faithless Affghans commenced a series of murderous onslaughts. The sepoys were so paralysed by the cold that they threw away their arms. The Europeans made an unsuccessful stand, and the whole were killed, with the exception of two or three fugitives,

who escaped, by a miracle, this terrible vengeance. Lady Sale and a few more, who had been given as hostages, were the only other survivors to tell the tale of this unfortunate expedition.

But the triumph of the victors was brief, and reversed in the sequel. The Affghans had suffered wrong, but retaliated without faith or mercy. They had expelled the invaders, but their purpose had been effected by the vilest perfidy and unsparing cruelty. The British were now the injured party; humanity had been outraged; a military convention scandalously violated, and the prestige of our martial superiority impaired. All these injuries and disparagements it was incumbent to redeem. It was promptly and nobly done before the expiration of the year. A new army, by forced marches and daring enterprises, speedily reappeared on the scene, undaunted by the disasters of their predecessors. Afghanistan was again triumphantly overrun, Cabool reoccupied, and, under the able generalship of Pollock, Nott, and Sale, the British name and power fully reestablished. But the original error of the Indian government in invading, without cogent reasons, so distant and hardly accessible a region, was not annulled, but strikingly confirmed, by the voluntary withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan after its reoccupation.

The foundation of our ascendancy in the East is the opinion of our martial superiority, and which it is essential to the permanency of our power unflinchingly to maintain. It is not improbable that the ephemeral successes of the Affghans had some influence in prompting later hostile movements of native states in closer proximity to our north-west frontier. But if any illusive hopes had been formed from the Cabool disasters, they were quickly dispelled by a rapid series of triumphs.

The Ameers of Scinde, a kind of feudal lords, who occupied the lower delta of the Indus, chiefly as hunting-grounds, were the first dealt with, their forces defeated by Sir Charles Napier, and their misgoverned territory converted into a province of our Indian empire. The Sikh tribes next obtained attention ; they had long been an object of watchfulness from their internal divisions and extensive military preparations. They had, however, not been molested or encroached upon by the British, and the sanguinary battles which ensued were the results of their own spontaneous challenge to measure swords. The first aggression was apparently under the illusion of a favourable opportunity, and that they were in a condition to contend in open field with the Anglo-Indian forces. So little had the Calcutta government sought or expected hostilities that, at the outset of the war, it seems to have been taken by surprise, or at least not fully prepared or at hand to encounter the Sikhs on their first dash across the boundary line of the Sutlej river. Subsequent energy amply redeemed this backwardness of preparation, and an invasion, of no little daring and completeness in its warlike material and combinations, was triumphantly repelled. Even more was achieved ; the vanquished Sikhs were pursued into their own territory ; Lahore, their capital, occupied ; and their power entirely broken by the victories of Moodkee, Ferozeshah, and So-braon. In these arduous exploits the names of Governor-General Hardinge, Lord Gough, and Sir Harry Smith are eminently distinguished. It was not till 1849 that the settlement was complete, and Lahore, with the entire Punjab, consolidated with our East Indian possessions.

These successful annexations of territory have been the result of inevitable necessity. Viscount Hardinge, the veteran of the field of Waterloo, appears to have been

sincerely bent on the maintenance of peace ; but with restless and faithless neighbours, rarely bound by the ties of honour or treaties, or even a rational appreciation of their own interests, wars become unavoidable. In proximity with these disturbing relations has our Oriental sovereignty frequently been placed, and they help to extenuate our almost ceaseless career of hostilities and territorial aggrandisement. The servants of the Company could not always remain quiescent, even if honestly intent on resisting the seduction of easy conquests and more extended rule over a feeble and inferior race. To fight or submit to wrong, to insidious intrigue, perfidy, insecurity, or open violence, have often been the sole alternatives. Such has been the tenure of our Indian dominion, and in some of its irksome conditions the subjugation of the Sikhs originated. At a later period, in 1856, under a like necessity, and under the able administration of the Earl Dalhousie, the annexation of the dependency of Oude was consummated. For the good of the subject natives it had been too long deferred. For fifty years the puppet prince and his predecessors of the court of Lucknow had systematically violated treaty stipulations, had delayed reform to the great detriment of the people, and neglected all public duties to riot in tumult and sensuality. The Deccan, which is the last native state of any magnitude in our eastern dominion, is a parallel case, and from misgovernment seems to invite a similar transfer of sovereignty. By the annexation of Oude the East India Company has acquired an additional territory of 24,000 square miles, containing 3,500,000 inhabitants, yielding about 1,000,000*l.* of revenue. But the aim of British policy is less revenue — a surplus above expenditure has never been realised — than guarantees for the future tranquillity of Hindostan, and the desire of imparting to its native population the benefits of European civilisation.

The sequestration of Oude formed almost the last act in the administration of British India by the Marquis of Dalhousie. The government of his lordship began with pacific intentions, and a firm resolve to concentrate his energies on internal improvements ; but, like his immediate predecessors, he found his policy controlled by those emergencies which have just been adverted to, and which, in the existing civilisation of the Hindoo peninsula, render uninterrupted peace impossible. But these objects, which Lord Dalhousie had esteemed paramount in his government, were not neglected. Besides with a vigorous hand coercing Birmah and other refractory states, he gave a new direction to the prosperity of the four provinces ; introducing railway and telegraph lines and postal improvements, and an entire reform of the whole constitution of the Indian government. After eight years of exhausting toils, his lordship left Calcutta for England amidst the unfeigned regrets of the entire community. Experience had made his lordship wise, and he refrained from holding out to his successor an assurance of peace. In his leave-taking address, he said, "The prospect is fair and full of promise ;" but "no prudent man, having any knowledge of Eastern affairs, would ever venture to predict a prolonged continuation of peace in India." He admitted the wise and liberal spirit which now animates all having influence in Oriental affairs ; but "in regions so vast, and among interests so various, all progress must needs be slow.*

Before concluding these outlines relative to Hindoo affairs, the changes made by the imperial government in their administration require to be noticed. By the Act of 1853 for the better government of India, salutary im-

* Calcutta Address, March 6. 1856.

provements have been effected by reducing the numbers of the home directory to eighteen, and vesting the appointment of six members in the crown. Existing rights of patronage have been abolished. Haileybury College and the seminary of Addiscombe have been thrown open to the public, and provision made for securing competent abilities — never remarkably deficient — in the civil and military servants of the Company.

Contemporary with events in the distant East happened various occurrences in England of characteristic import. Among the domestic eccentricities of the period was the advent in Kent of a fanatic named Thom, who, under the delusion of a divine commission, and at the head of a not less deluded multitude, appeared in the open field arrayed against the Queen's forces. This madman, having first killed the commanding officer, was himself shot dead by the military; affording a singular instance of the popular ignorance subsisting in the vicinity of the British metropolis. The principality of Wales, which for centuries had been almost beneath historical or newspaper notice, suddenly became the scene of novel and stirring events. Some of these were local in origin and aim; others had a wider ramification. The camisade, or "Rebecca riots," doubtless sprung from the grinding exactions of the Welsh squires in the multiplication and increase of turnpike tolls. But the insurrectionary attack on the town of Newport under the self-deluded Frost, a late magistrate in the principality, was a political movement connected with an extensive diffusion of Chartist doctrines. Antecedently to this tragical occurrence, in which several lives were lost without the slightest hope of a successful issue, the Chartist had been zealous in the propagation of their opinions, both in the iron districts of Wales and in the northern counties of

England. In the session of 1839 they had presented a petition to the Commons with 1,280,000 names, praying for universal suffrage, vote by ballot, &c. This extraordinary document formed a cylinder of parchment of almost the diameter of a coach-wheel, and was literally rolled into the House. It met with an indignant, if not contemptuous treatment, on account of its assumed impracticable claims. Incensed or disappointed at this reception of the "Six Points," the Welsh insurrection, which soon followed, may have been intended for the beginning of a less peaceful agitation than the petitioning of Parliament.

The industrial depression of the country consequent on the overtrading of 1836—37, and consequent reaction, was the main cause of these popular disturbances. From this period to the close of 1841, commercial embarrassments and the privations of the people had continued to increase in number and intensity. One half or more of the inhabitants of some of the large towns of the North, as of Liverpool, Manchester, Stockport, and Leeds, had been, from scarcity of employment, pauperised. The severe distress was evinced by the diminished produce of the excise, customs, and other fiscal items, indicative of national progress or decline. Ministers themselves became financially embarrassed from the decrease of the indirect taxes, and partly from the increased naval and military expenditure in Canada, the Mediterranean, and China. These difficulties, augmented by the inability, previously noticed, to command a working majority in parliament to carry such measures as they esteemed requisite to meet public exigencies, brought their official existence to a crisis. Retention of office, indeed, under the inefficient tenure by which they had held it, was a compromise of the public welfare, and inconsistent with constitutional usage. These appear to have been the views

taken of their position by Sir Robert Peel, who moved a resolution embracing them (May 27. 1841), and carried it, after a debate of four days, by 312 to 311 votes. A majority of 1 against them, in so full a house, was significant enough, but not an overwhelming defeat. Ministers appealed to the country ; its sense was promptly taken, and, on the meeting of the new parliament in August, it spoke very distinctly against the administration, but not in favour of corn-laws or monopoly. A trial of strength soon followed, and an amendment to the address moved by Sir Robert Peel was carried by 360 to 269. Upon this intimation ministers resigned. The business time of the session had, however, passed away ; but, in the ensuing year the new ministry met parliament prepared for work. Having had no direct or responsible share in public disorders, they could with less scruple and more authority prescribe remedies. Their most pressing difficulties were, a serious deficiency in the revenue, next the corn duties, an impolitic tariff, and lastly, Ireland and the schism in the Scotch church. For dealing with fiscal deficiencies, Sir Robert Peel determined on the bold measure of introducing the income-tax in a time of peace. However repulsive this expedient might be, it was perhaps alone adequate to the exigency ; and in the existing privations of the masses, it had the advantage of throwing the burden of additional imposts on those most able to bear them. Moreover it afforded the minister an ample resource for the development of other portions of his financial scheme, in the repeal of taxes obstructive to industry and commercial freedom.

The unreserved adoption of the principle of Free Trade, and its energetic advancement by the Peel ministry, form its preeminent distinction from commencement to its resignation in 1846. But commercial freedom neither

began with Sir Robert Peel, nor ended with his administration, but has continued a cardinal feature in national progress up to the present period. Its beneficial influence on the domestic peace and industrial prosperity of England cannot be overrated ; and as her successful example is likely to be followed by other states, its spread will become equivalent to the promulgation of a healing faith among mankind, by showing the true foundations upon which their greatest happiness and mutual amity are dependent. Free trade being of such high import, it is only justice briefly to glance at those to whom the world has been mainly indebted for the new revelation.

It rarely happens that the earliest germ of a new truth is traceable, and we must generally be content, as in dealing with created organisms of every kind, with recognising them at a secondary stage of progress. The cogent reasonings and elucidations of Adam Smith were doubtless the first fully to demonstrate the errors of the Mercantile System ; but the author of the "Wealth of Nations" had a precursor so early as 1691. Sir Dudley North, in his "Discourses on Trade," as already briefly noted, inculcated the important truths that "The world, as to trade, is but as one nation or people, and therein nations are as persons. There can be no trade unprofitable to the public ; for if any prove so, men leave it off. To force men to deal in any prescribed manner, may profit such as happen to serve them ; but the public gains not, because it is taken from one subject to give to another." In these maxims are comprised the chief elements of a non-protective policy ; but they slumbered for a century without penetrating into the cabinets of practical statesmen. Mr. Pitt was the first to espouse them, by the conclusion of a commercial treaty with France in 1786. His aim was to promote intercourse between the two

countries. France, he said, would gain a market of eight millions of people for her wines and luxuries, and we a market of twenty-four millions for our manufactures.* The opposition condemned the treaty, more from party or political considerations than on economical principles. Fox went so far as to affirm that a "natural rivalry or hereditary enmity" subsisted between England and France. Burke† and Francis apparently cherished similar impressions of our relations with our neighbour. The minister was ably supported by Wilberforce, and by Lord Shelburne in the Upper House, and an approving vote of the treaty passed both Houses. Consequently, French cloths of a fine quality began to be imported: they were preferred to our own; no fashionable man was to be seen without a coat of French cloth. The usual result followed: a loud outcry was raised by the English manufacturers against French woollens; but the benefits of competition were soon felt. In less than two years the cloth of our manufacturers became equal to that imported from France — the one could not be distinguished from the other; and though coats of French cloth continued in name the fashion, the cloth of which they were made was English. Notwithstanding the experiment had been successful, the principle was not progressive: the long French war intervened, which left neither time nor disposition for experimental legislation; and it was not till some years

* House of Commons, Feb. 12. 1787.

† Burke gave to party or self what was meant for mankind. At a later period he gave a very distinct enunciation of the true principles of commerce. In a letter to Arthur Young, dated May 23. 1797, he says, "Monopoly is contrary to natural right. Free trade is the same thing as the free use of property."—(*Correspondence of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, edited by Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke.*)

subsequent to the peace of 1815 that the subject of commercial freedom obtained attention.

In 1822 the absurdity of the mercantile theory began to be recognised by the British parliament. In that year Mr. Wallace, the President of the Board of Trade, introduced measures for effecting improvements in the warehousing of goods, and relaxations in the navigation laws. The Marquis of Lansdowne in the Upper House, and Mr. Huskisson and the late Earl of Ripon in the Lower, were the most able advocates of the new policy. It began even to find favour among the commercial classes; and petitions in favour of Free Trade were presented from the Barings and other leading merchants of London, Glasgow, and Bristol. This concurrence of trading interests with the deductions of economical science gradually overcame the repugnance of the Liverpool administration to change; and some progress was made by the repeal of laws against aliens, of bounties for the encouragement of the fisheries and the linen manufacture of Ireland, and by a partial opening of the colonial trade to foreigners. The old notion had been, that colonies had been planted and were protected solely for the use of the mother-country,—that they had no right, as Lord Chatham held, to “make even a nail for a horseshoe for themselves;” all they produced ought to be brought to our market, and all they consumed ought to be purchased exclusively of ourselves. They were *our own*, and we had a right to do as we pleased with them. Under these extravagant pretensions mutual injuries were suffered; both England and her dependencies were impoverished; for both parties were often compelled to buy dearer and sell cheaper, in this exclusive intercourse, than if left free to deal with strangers.

The free-trade principle, however, was only opened under George IV.; and the Whig ministries of his suc-

cessor were too much occupied by political reforms simultaneously to grapple with commercial improvements, opposed as they were by old trade interests and long cherished prejudices. The shipowners were tenaciously adverse to them, and long persisted in their hostility. Next to the land, the mercantile marine was considered one of the chief state pillars, and very exclusive laws had been made for its protection. Under the navigation laws, the shipping trade of the empire had been more hermetically sealed against foreign competitors than the home market against the introduction of Dantzic wheat. Relaxation, however, had become imperative, if only with the view of averting the retaliatory imitation of Prussia, the Netherlands, and other states in a similarly exclusive direction. Besides these rivalries in error, existed the indefensible differential duties on Baltic and Canadian timber. It was only in 1842 that this injustice towards the general weal was resolutely laid hold of; and even then the shipowners had the hardihood to petition for a continuance of their privilege in fetching from a double distance an inferior article, to the detriment of all the ship-building, house-building, and other building of the empire. The history of the abrogation of the protective duties in the silk manufacture I pass over, since the results of the admission of the competition of French silks, and the resistance to it, were precisely of the same kind as those already noticed on the opening of the home market to French woollens. The details given are sufficient to connect antecedent endeavours with those of Sir Robert Peel's ministry. Monopoly had hung over commerce like an ill-omened bird, that with dismal note sought to mislead or cramp the expanding energies and intelligence of the community.

A valuable chart for Sir Robert's pilotage had been

prepared for him by a committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the import duties, and how far these duties were meant for protection or revenue. The severe scrutiny to which the tariff was then subjected, attested that little progress had yet been made in commercial freedom. Our customs were found, as Mr. Macgregor declared, "burdens, restrictions, and delays on the prosperity and industry of the country." It was to beat down these obstructions that Sir. R. Peel began his series of reforms in the tariff in 1842. The number of articles subject to duty were about 1200, many of the duties little productive to the revenue ; and it was by successive reduction or abolition of them in the next three years, that the Augean accumulation of centuries in the customs was purified.

Such relaxations plainly indicated the future direction of ministerial policy. Its obvious finality tended to the entire extinction of protection, and the unreserved application to every product of the principle of commercial freedom. The formidable agitation throughout England of the Anti Corn Law League of Manchester, had left no intermediate resting place. Other occurrences helped to force onward and smooth the way to this conclusive legislative settlement. The public renunciation by Lord John Russell of a fixed duty on corn, in place of the sliding scale, was an example of yielding to immediate urgencies, which opportunely lessened the obloquy of dereliction from past professions in the minister ; while at the same time the impending famine in Ireland, from failure in the potato crop, concurred to afford a popular pretext for working on the sympathies of a numerous class, more impressible by existing calamities than by the calculation of a distant and comprehensive intelligence. Accordingly, on the first day of the session of 1846, Sir R.

Peel announced his entire conversion, and declared that his opinions on the law which governed the importation of food had undergone a change; that he could no longer meet the annual motion of Mr. Villiers by a direct negative; and that he now felt that all the grounds on which protection to native industry had been advocated were untenable.

These admissions were followed by the introduction of a bill for the gradual repeal of the import duties on corn, and the settlement of a great question of public policy, long conflictingly agitated by the agricultural and commercial classes. The Corn Laws had been pertinaciously clung to as the sheet anchor of the aristocracy of the soil, and needful equivalent for alleged peculiar burdens on land. Energetic discussion and inquiry had weakened the force of these opinions or pretexts. Of peculiar burdens the landed interest had already relieved themselves by a stationary land-tax, a stringent poor-law, and the repeal of agricultural taxes. And as a protective of rural industry, the corn laws had proved illusive or misleading. At most they were only protective of a class — of landlords' rent — not of the interests of occupiers or labourers; while they were undeniably obstructive to domestic trade, and the expansion of foreign commerce. Despite of these established conclusions, an influential party still adhered to a partial or detrimental policy, and viewed with alarm the measure for the immediate reduction of the corn duties, and their final extinction in February, 1849. Their adverse apprehensions were fatal to the existence of the Peel ministry, by the alienation of a large section of its former supporters, headed by the Duke of Richmond in the Lords, and by Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli in the Commons. The tie of allegiance had been weakened by the liberal tendency

of Sir Robert's antecedent mercantile policy in the reform of the tariff, and they only waited for an opportunity to inflict what they esteemed merited punishment on their recreant leader.

The wished-for occasion soon occurred, in opposing Sir Robert's bill for the better protection of life in Ireland. Deliberate assassinations had of late been alarmingly frequent in that unsettled country ; they had been perpetrated in open day, and spectators of the crime had, in some instances, evinced indifference or reluctance to aid the ends of justice. It was to meet these frightful atrocities, that the Protection of Life Bill was framed. Objectionable in some of its clauses, it seemed warranted by the perilous necessity ; but by a heterogeneous junction of political extremes, in which the declared pretexts are usually more overt than the real motives, the ministry were defeated on the second reading of their bill by a majority of 73. Similar combinations of parties on other measures being in prospect, Sir Robert dissolved his administration, promptly acting on the constitutional maxim he had prescribed to his predecessors on his accession to power, namely, that he, as they had been, was unable to command the parliamentary support necessary to carry measures which he deemed essential to the public welfare.

The five years of Sir Robert Peel's government had been eminently successful. A deficient treasury had been replenished and made to overflow ; a new tariff on enlightened principles of commercial freedom nearly completed ; and a great question, long the topic of angry controversy and industrial jealousy, settled to general satisfaction, save a few mistaken or interested monopolists. Foreign affairs went on not less auspiciously than those of domestic import. The Earl of Aberdeen apparently

enjoyed the same kind of confidential influence among the continental sovereigns, that the Duke of Wellington did among British peers. The tone maintained by the foreign secretary was conciliatory, and there were few if any misunderstandings calling for hostile demonstrations, by costly armaments or mediatorial interventions. One or two drawbacks to the claims and prosperous course of the late ministry, it would be unjust to their successors not emphatically to designate. Extrinsic circumstances which they had no merit in producing, had been favourable to the Peel ministry. Upon their accession to office, the country was on the eve of recovering from one of those long fits of industrial depression which have periodically characterised the commercial history of the country for the last sixty years. Of this revival the Peel administration had had the full benefit, while their predecessors had to struggle in the shallows and obstructions of an ebbing tide, which tended both to their unpopularity and financial embarrassment. The deserts of the Peelites were limited to executive acts, and did not extend to the original conception or promulgation of the new doctrine; whereas the principal leaders of the Whigs, both in office and out, in speaking and writing, had long been the strenuous advocates of a liberal commercial policy. Sometimes it is more meritorious to follow than to lead; and it may be, that a higher standard of merit pertains to statesmen who, in a frank and generous spirit of self-abnegation, act on the suggestions of others rather than on their own. Upon this Mr. Burke may have founded his somewhat startling apothegm, and which he certainly did not himself exemplify in his political practice, namely, that a public writer ought not to be paid for advocating his own opinions, only those to which he is adverse, or has little sympathy for.

Consistently with themselves, the new or Whig ministry continued the endeavour to purify the tariff, and to extend the scope of free trade in its application to colonial government and home navigation. The general aim of the navigation laws had been to encourage British shipping by securing the carrying trade of the country, both foreign and coastwise, to British-built ships, owned and navigated by British subjects. They were of ancient date; but the policy of them was most directly resorted to under Oliver Cromwell, to counteract the maritime ascendancy of the Dutch. In this the object was political, but at a later period the aim became more commercial and selfish, and begat imitation; so that the Americans, after achieving their independence, passed a navigation act. But experience soon proved that this was a game at which two parties could play and neither win; that if a navigation act was a national benefit at all, it was only onesided; and that the conflicting acts of rival communities were mutually detrimental, compelling the ships of the competing states, in the out-going voyage, to sail in ballast. Negotiations ensued, and a treaty was concluded, which, for the first time, allowed a deviation from the strictness of maritime protection. By this treaty, the ships of the two countries were placed reciprocally on the same footing in the ports of England and the United States, and all discriminative duties charged on the goods mutually conveyed were repealed. European states copied the example of the Americans, menaced us with retaliatory acts, and compelled us to conclude reciprocity treaties with the chief naval powers of the Continent. Whatever, therefore, may have been the primary policy of the navigation laws, or their influence on the maritime greatness of the country, they had ceased to be maintainable. England being the greatest of mercantile communities, having more ships to employ, and

more commodities to exchange than any other nation, she was most deeply interested in the establishment of entire freedom of intercourse. By these comprehensive views parliament seems to have been influenced in the gradual extinction of exclusive privileges in favour of British shipping ; and the complement to this liberal system was consummated in 1854 by the opening of the coasting trade, and the admission of foreign ships to the carrying of goods or passengers from one British port to another.*

A further step has been made in this enlightened career. It was once thought that international stipulations by which other states should be required, *pari passu* with ourselves, to relax their tariffs, was a politic procedure. It has been wisely abandoned ; we adopted a more efficient mode of instruction, in seeking to reform others by first reforming our own mercantile policy. It was a debt we owed the world. Nations had been misled by the illusive example of our exclusive commercial laws ; they mistakenly ascribed our prosperity to them, and we arrested the spread of an erring imitation by a prompt reversal of our practice. In our efforts to reclaim foreigners, reciprocity is not needful to the advancement of our own interests. Onesided free trade is better than conflicting prohibitions ; since, if we are restricted by the perversity of others to the one alternative of either buying cheap or selling dear, still we profit on the one hand, instead of losing on both, as we should do by a retaliatory tariff, which, either way, limited interchanges. Want of reciprocity in our neighbours is an error that must correct itself, by the manifest impoverishment they must incur from buying dear of themselves rather than cheap of us. But foreigners have not been unmindful of British leading ;

* 17 Vict. cap. 5., March 23. 1854.

Belgium, Holland, Russia, and some other continental states have responded to our appeal, and reduced the rate of their protective duties.*

Whether reciprocated or not, Free Trade, like many other virtues, has inherent advantages — may be administered in any quantity, and be proportionately remunerative. In its practical application it is irrespective of time or place, of old or young communities ; to small or large states it is correspondingly beneficial. Nations which trade the most will profit by it the most, but those of less traffic will benefit in proportion to the extent of their commerce. England, as before observed, being the most mercantile community, is the most interested in its adoption ; and, being also the most prosperous, a forward example by her is likely most to fix attention and be followed.

It is not the parent state only, but her offspring and affinities in every degree which have thriven under the stimulating influence of Liberalism. It has been seen on a former occasion† how Ireland was cramped and irritated, and driven to the verge of rebellion, by the oppressive and pernicious nature of the protective system. The opening of her trade was the first step in her conciliation, and in drawing into more friendly sympathies with England the middle classes of her population. The same maladies continued for a longer period to alienate and retard the progress of British North America and our West Indian colonies, and which were alleviated by similar remedies. Their trade was fettered ; they were limited in their markets both for the sale and purchase of goods ; they were constrained to trade only with the mother-country, to buy dear and sell cheap, and the in-

* Foreign Tariffs, Parl. Pap. No. 1016., Sess. 1853.]

† *Antè*, p. 461.

jury to both was aggravated by distance and freightage. They suffered also in political government, from the same mistaken spirit of monopoly, and effort to protect exclusive interests. There were family preferences in their administration ; disqualification of creed or race, ineligibility to be electors or members of executive or legislative councils, by which classes were kept divided and hostile, partial interests bolstered up, and the general weal of colonies neglected or compromised.

All, or nearly all, these invidious sources of jealousy, internal disturbance, and obstruction to colonial progress, have been swept away, and ample beyond expectation has been the return. The Canadas have almost doubled in wealth and population since 1840 under the liberal system. In numbers, commerce, riches, canal navigation, and railways, the British American possessions are fast accumulating all the elements of a flourishing empire, and are already not greatly inferior in resources to what the United States were on the outset of their career of independence. The same free and vivifying spirit has extended to the Polynesian islands. Free constitutions have been sought and granted to New Zealand and the provinces of Australia. Even if they sought independence, England, it is probable, would not be greatly adverse, provided they were competent to self-government and international defence, and severance was the general wish. Free or dependent British interests are identical with those of her colonies. If they thrive, she is certain, next to themselves, to obtain the largest share in their prosperity. These have become the avowed maxims of colonial policy, in full confidence that our lien upon them is indissoluble, from the ties of a common origin, language, laws, traditions, interests, and wants. Time's effacing fingers cannot erase these ; they will last, it is probable, till the parent isle of so many states

and empires shall be lost in some myth or second Iona as distant and obscure but less unreal than the fables of the Homeric age.

I have dwelt upon this subject from its forming a memorable feature of progress under Queen Victoria. It certainly had not its first beginning in the present reign. But among the leading statesmen under George III. and his successor, it met with only a limited reception. Like all great truths adverse to prevalent opinions, Free Trade has had its days of infancy, trial, and slow development. But the period of its final triumph, and of a full appreciation of its benefits to individuals, colonies, and nations, unquestionably pertains to her majesty's government. Among ourselves, few conversions remain to be made; and on the Continent an international congress, composed of representatives from different states, assembles annually at Brussels to aid the diffusion of free-trade doctrines. Conversions are rapid under despotisms; and sovereigns have only to wave their sceptres, and a new faith, new code of laws, or new system of political economy is promptly inaugurated in their dominions.

CHAP. XXXIII.

QUEEN VICTORIA.— PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND
DISCOVERIES.

Tendency of recent Discoveries to equalise Social Benefits.— Retrospective Glance at late Advances in Material and Mental Appliances ; Mechanical Inventions pertaining to Literature.— Improvements in Internal Communications and Modes of Travelling.— Roads of Telford, M'Adam, and Macneill.— Suspension and Tubular Bridges.— Railways and Locomotives.— The Electric Telegraph.— Probable Influence of augmented Means of Intercourse on International Relations.— Novelties of Travel and Sporting Excursions.

THE successful application of the principles of commercial freedom, which was the concluding topic of the last chapter, formed only one of many advances that have culminated in the present reign. It has been an era remarkable not only for extraordinary discoveries, but the consummation of many improvements which, in different degrees, had long been silently progressive, without attaining to maturity of development. If it were desirable by one word to characterise the main tendency of the civilisation in which we live, move, and have our being, I think “ Equalisation ” would be as apt and comprehensive a term as could be employed. The preeminent distinctions of our age consist in its material, intellectual, and artistical progress ; and in each of these lines of pursuit, the striking result has been to render more accessible to all, benefits which had been previously exclusive or non-existent. Under the two denominations either of

Physical advantages, or those pertaining to Thought, modern discoveries may be generally classed; and it is impossible to reflect for a moment on the history of either without being impressed with the issue just remarked, namely, the resulting tendency of both to multiply and make more generally equal the conveniences and enjoyments of social existence.

A truth so patent it may be superfluous to illustrate. But I cannot help just glancing at each current of our acquisitions in mental and material science converging in the direction indicated. I will, however, not indulge in detail, for the subjects themselves have been made familiar by the common utilities to which they have ministered. They are the handle to the axe which cut down the forest; part of the thing done, cause and effect in the production of available benefits. Instead of losing myself and readers in a wide field, I shall simply count the steps of the ladder that has conducted us to the existing platform, upon which it must be the pride and pleasure of every one to contemplate the life around him.

To begin, then, with the first of the two divisions, that of Thought, how vastly its instrumentality has been augmented from the period of the discovery of printing by the auxiliary agency of stereotyping and steam-press working. These, however, would have been nullities without paper; but here the needful was forthcoming, by improvements in its manufacture, quality, and dimensions without limit. Consequent on these discoveries has been the multiplication of books of all kinds; and the marvels wrought in Journalism, both in respect of contents, size, and intrinsic cheapness. This offers only one phase of the subject; another is connected with the series of postal improvements, from the mail carts to the mail coaches of

Palmer in 1784, onward to those of Rowland Hill, by which not only the diffusion of ideas by books and newspapers, but in private correspondence, has been so immensely facilitated. Not remotely connected with the augmented means for the communication of mind is the rapid series of discoveries for the illustration and embellishment of literature by wood engraving, lithography, steel-plate engraving, daguerreotype, and photography. Then followed the greatest and most inscrutable of all auxiliaries in mental transmissions, that of the electric telegraph. Volumes have been written, and deservedly, in the amplification of these topics, in illustration of their infinite uses, by their tendency to elevate and unite mankind, and open to them new sources of delight and felicity.

It would be amusing, not less than instructive, to trace the progress of the Material discoveries, in which by successive advances they have attained, in common with the more intellectual appliances, their climax of improvement. They surround us everywhere: in cathedral cities and manufacturing towns, in noble ports and harbours, in works of art, grandeur, and utility, in ecclesiastical or palatial edifices, in gigantic factories, capacious docks, and warehouses innumerable. Absorbed in the pleasure or profit of these wonderful creations, we seldom think of their first beginnings any more than those of the peerage or the monarchy. They have, however, been all alike of humble paternity; and very curious would it be to revert to the earlier germs of their development. He must have been something of a Wren or a Rumbold who invented chimneys to houses, and which appear, from Hallam, not to have been earlier than the thirteenth or fourteenth century; nor less blessed was the genius who contrived, first for patrician, next for plebeian comfort, to let in the solar

light, and exclude sleet and the east wind from our dwellings. These were invaluable acquisitions; but they hardly contributed more to the architectural complement and commodiousness of modern mansions than a ship of Julius Cæsar to the scientific combinations of an ocean steamer, or a bridle-way of the last century to the great North Road. But the least disputable and most original of the material claims of the present time unquestionably consist of its mechanical inventions in relation to mining, the manufacturing arts, and the modes of conveyance and communication. The most important of the first have been previously noticed*, and the second only requires attention.

Progress in internal communications has been, as in other advances, by a succession of improvements, each of which had to force its way in defiance of popular resistance. The turnpike system, introduced in 1663, by which roads were sought to be maintained by the payment of tolls, was unfavourably received, and a century after had not become generally available for travelling and the conveyance of merchandise. Northward from London in 1739 there was no turnpike beyond Grantham; and the only way forward to Glasgow was a narrow causeway, with an unmade soft road on each side of it. Such roads must have been untraversable in winter, and in summer they were not passable by a wheeled carriage, only by packhorses; and these were, in truth, up to a later period, the sole medium for goods traffic in the midland and northern counties. The intelligent Arthur Young, in his tours in 1770—1772, often adverts to the wretched state of the common roads. He speaks well of some in Wiltshire, and of the great north road to Barnet,

* *Ante*, p. 539.

and of the Kentish turnpike. In Norfolk, he says, where the roads are “the boast of the inhabitants, they have not one mile of excellent road in the whole county.”* In the muddy road from Bury to Sudbury in Suffolk, he was forced to move “as slow as in any unmended lane in Wales.” The large grips he found cut across to carry off the water must have greatly aggravated the discomfort of travellers. In the north he found matters, as might be expected, in a still more primitive state. At Castle Howard he was near being “swallowed up in a slough.” From Richmond to Darlington the roads were execrable, broken into holes like an old pavement, sufficient to “dislocate the bones.” “Yet,” says he, “the people all drink tea.”† The Lancashire ways he found execrably bad. “They will here meet,” he says, “with ruts, which I actually measured, four feet deep, and floating with mud only from a wet summer; what, therefore, must it be after a winter?” Accustomed to the smooth, secure, and I will add ungibbeted roads (for in those days the scarecrow of a Turpin, Nevison, or other freebooter, was not an uncommon spectacle), we can form only imperfect ideas of the delays and dangers of travellers.

The great improvers of roads in the last thirty or forty years have been Telford, M'Adam, and Macneill; in all points they have not been agreed, but the general aim has been to obviate previous imperfections by making roads straight, sufficiently wide, dry, hard, level, and strong, to bear with the least obstruction the traffic of men, horses, and carriages. The celebrated Holyhead road of Telford was thirty feet wide, exclusive of foot-paths, with a fall of six inches from the centre to the

* Six Weeks' Tour in the Southern Counties, p. 320.

† Six Months' Tour through the North of England, vol. vi. p. 254.

side channels. M'Adam's plan, which has been extensively adopted in repairing old or defective roads, was to take up their materials, break the stones into a regulated size, and replace them, leaving the road chiefly to its own formation and settlement by the traffic over it. No binding material was used; care was taken not to use substances likely to imbibe moisture, and the road was kept clean till its surface had consolidated by use and frequent rakings. M'Adam's plan had only partial success; it was available for turnpike roads of little traffic, but was not solid enough in foundation for busy thoroughfares. In London a few years since the granite pavement of some of the chief thoroughfares was taken up, and the streets macadamised; but experience showed that the alternate dust and mud raised upon them by ceaseless traffic was excessively noxious in crowded thoroughfares.* Subsequently the streets of the metropolis have been in constant revolution by a rapid course of experimental trials in stone, iron, wood, and asphalte, in divers forms, modes of joining, surface covering, and subjacent materials.

There have been remarkable advances in the erection of bridges as well as in road-making. One of the most striking novelties of this class in the vicinity of London was the completion by Clark, in 1827, of the Hammer-smith suspension bridge. The enterprise of Telford accomplished a more stupendous work in spanning the Menai Strait with a gigantic suspension bridge, in continuation of the great line of road between London and Holyhead. This giant undertaking was, in 1851, outdone by the colossal tubular suspension bridge of Mr. Robert Stephenson, carried over the same strait, and connecting

* Roads and Railroads, p. 88.

the Chester and Holyhead line of railway. It spans 2000 feet of the strait, weighs 10,000 tons, and is capable of bearing 4000 tons ; yet its Brobdignag links were by the mechanical force of the hydraulic press and the steam engine, without any muscular exertion, flung across the flood into position. The celebrity of Rennie and of the two Brunels in civil engineering is likely to live in the Thames Tunnel, as well as in railways and bridges.

The rage for Canals, already commemorated* as an auxiliary in conveyance, was about 1792, and prior to the recent attempts at improvements in roads. But the present age has been astounded by the sudden rise of new modes of conveyance far more apt for their purpose than any previously existing either by land or water. The introduction of Railways and Steam Navigation may be said to pertain wholly to the present century. There were crude attempts earlier ; but they were unsuccessful, or of such limited utility as not to encourage imitation. In the Newcastle collieries wooden railways were used in the seventeenth century, and for which, on a limited scale, iron began, in 1767, to be substituted as a more durable material. These were private works of hardly any significance. The first act of parliament for a work of this kind was passed in 1801, for the construction of a railway in the vicinity of London from Wandsworth to Croydon. In the twenty-three years which followed only twenty-one acts were passed for railways ; showing the little alacrity with which the new mechanical contrivance had been brought into use.

The application of steam to the propelling of vessels in the water made a contemporary and equally slow progress. Steam was used on rivers for raising ballast and

* P. 554.

large quantities of water as early as 1618 *, and between 1781 and 1790 attempts were made on the Forth and Clyde Canal to apply it to the propulsion of vessels. In 1801 a trial was made on the Thames, and a barge propelled, the "Annual Register" says, against "a strong current at the rate of two miles and a half per hour." These attempts do not appear to have made a favourable impression, and it was reserved for a later period successfully to repeat them with improvements. This was done by Robert Fulton, a native of Pennsylvania, and skilful engineer, who, having witnessed the experiments in England, established a steam-boat, which plied successfully on the Hudson between New York and Albany. A few years later steamers were introduced into England,—the Comet, a small vessel of three-horse power, being the first,—and began to ply on the Clyde in 1811 with passengers for hire. It is unnecessary to proceed further with the subject of steamers; they rapidly multiplied, have been adopted in every civilised community, and are no longer limited to rivers, lakes, nor seas, but traverse the two great oceans of the Atlantic and Pacific.

Railways have become a still more familiar topic. But in railways the substitution of the Locomotive Carriage in place of animal labour remains to be noticed. Dr. Robinson of Glasgow first, and after him the celebrated James Watt, in 1784 appear to have entertained the idea of propelling land carriages by steam; but they did not make any effort to reduce the suggestion to practice. It is probable neither philosopher fully comprehended the desideratum afterwards found to be so essential in railways, namely, a self-moving machine, with power adequate not only to move itself but a train of carriages after

* The Author's Chronological History of England, p. 170.

it. In 1787 Mr. Symington exhibited the model of a steam-carriage, but whether it was the invention needed does not appear ; and it was not until 1804 that Trevithick invented and brought into use a propelling machine upon the railroad of Merthyr Tydvil. This invention contributed the desired complement to railways, and rendered the powerful agency of steam as efficient for the propulsion of carriages on land as vessels in water. Railways and locomotives subsequently multiplied together, and preparatory to the opening of the Manchester and Liverpool railway in 1830 there was a trial of speed between differently constructed locomotives. Two of them reached the rate of nearly thirty miles an hour, and a prize of 500*l.* was awarded to Mr. Stephenson, the successful competitor.

The laying down of iron rails for the easily rolling onward of wheel carriages appears a simple contrivance ; and one only feels surprised it did not come earlier into more general use ; but the invention of the Locomotive, in place of a stationary engine or animal power, presents such an extraordinary combination of mechanical appliances, that one feels at a loss which most to admire,—the beauty, portability, and compactness of the machine itself, or its entire adaptation and masterly fitness for its purpose. It gave completeness to the railway system, and disposed at once of every doubt of its superiority to the old apparatus of horse carriages, turnpikes, and the ordinary vehicles of conveyance. But, in common with the railway and electric telegraph, the locomotive was matured by successive improvements. At first the majority of engineers were against it*, on account of its greater risk, and a machine very different from the com-

* History of the English Railway, by Mr. Francis, vol. i. p. 125.

mon steam engine, with its cumbrous cistern, condenser, pumps, heavy beam, and fly-wheel being requisite. All these were rejected, and a mechanism of giant force, and entirely under command, was devised, dependent wholly on the elasticity of high-pressure steam. At the outset of the application of the new contrivance, some mistakes were fallen into, from misapprehension of its aptitudes. It was thought that the smooth tire of the wheels in contact with the smooth plane of the rail, would skid, and the wheels rotate without propelling impulse. It was an imaginary failure, inconsistent with the mathematical laws which govern the resolution of forces, and which no cog-fittings or other contrivance was requisite to obviate. Another misapprehension in the history of these remarkable inventions is worthy of record. In all the railways constructed and contemplated up to the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester line, none were undertaken with a view to the conveyance of passengers. In the prospectus of that work, a hope was held out that one-half the number of persons then travelling by coaches between the two towns might avail themselves of the less expense by the railway; but the chief inducement offered to subscribers was the conveyance of merchandise and cattle. On the contrary, steam-vessels were originally projected for the conveyance of passengers only, and up to 1820 were solely employed for this purpose. But passengers, not goods traffic, became the principal source of profit in both undertakings.

The unseen is apt to exceed the visible in all great revolutions, moral or material. Had it been possible to anticipate that a network of railways would in a few years thread the entire country, the great works might have been set about and executed with greater judgment, despatch, and economy. But the remark is applicable to all the great towns of the kingdom; if they were to be

created *de novo* they would be laid out and built upon a much superior plan for sanitary, cemetery, convenient, and tasteful purposes. All this is a species of after knowledge, which experience alone can buy ; the fruit of growing wants, means, and incidents. Had it been foreseen that railways would become the general thoroughfares, it would have simultaneously occurred that the construction of them did not fall within the category of the free trade principle, and was not a proper subject for the execution or proprietary of individuals or joint-stock companies. Right of locomotion, liberty to go anywhere at any time we please, ranks among the most valuable of civil immunities. These have been abridged, but certainly not without countervailing benefits in the less expense, greater speed, and augmented comfort of travelling. The Legislature, too, has not been unmindful of public interests, by stipulating for parliamentary trains at a fixed rate, and postal and military conveyances. Open competition has had the great drawback of causing delay and lavish expenditure in railways. Rival companies have competed, at an immense cost, for different lines ; and the interests of private parties have interfered to bias the decisions of parliamentary committees : all or most of these evils might have been obviated by the government determining, by preliminary surveys, the most eligible lines, leaving the execution open to general competition. The pecuniary loss has been enormous ; but, on the other hand, it may be doubted whether the railway system would have been extemporised by the State with the energy and *eclat* which has characterised it under the promptings of individual gain and emulative enterprise.

The entire revolution in itinerancy and communication has been a rapid succession of wonders, — the last, the greatest of all, is the subordination of the Electric Flash to

human uses. Dr. Franklin astonished Europe when he drew Heaven's lightning from the clouds, and bottled it up in a Leyden phial ; but the range of discovery is vastly extended now that the mysterious agent has been made the messenger of thought, and to syllable, by intelligible signs, the varied tongues of men. In this, the most recent flight of science, though the electric element itself is wholly incomprehensible, the laws which govern its practical result are brief and simple. The first of them is due to Galvani, who in 1793 discovered a new manifestation of electricity. But philosophical truths seldom fix attention until they have been made available to useful purposes, and the field of galvanism long continued limited to experiments on animal irritability, or an empirical practice in the medical art.

The ulterior discoveries, by which galvanism has been made applicable to electric communications, appear principally the following. If slips of two dissimilar metals, such as zinc and copper, be immersed in an acid solution, and their upper ends be joined to a piece of metallic wire, a current of electricity sets in from the zinc to the liquid, thence to the copper, and, through the wire, back to the zinc. This makes the circuit which is so material a feature in telegraphic arrangements. The second fact of importance is the property of the electric current, in passing through wire, to magnetise a piece of iron, if favourably placed, and conversely for a magnet to cause an electric current to pass through the wire. In the third discovery, made by Professor Oersted, of Copenhagen, in 1819, consists the main secret of telegraphic science ; and which is, that an electric current, transmitted through a wire placed parallel to a magnetic needle, either above or below it, causes the needle to deflect to the right or left, according as the current is made to pass on one side or the other.

Upon the deflection of the needle so produced, Messrs. Cooke and Wheatstone established their electric telegraph in 1837, and patented their invention. It has been thus illustrated:—If a needle turning upon a pivot were fixed at York, and if by a wire placed in proximity to it the needle could be made to move to the right or the left, through the agency of a power applied at the other end of the wire in London ; and if it were agreed that one motion of the needle to the left should signify *a* and one to the right *b*, we should have just such a contrivance as the common needle telegraphs now in use.* Professor Wheatstone has ascertained that the speed of the electric current through copper wire equals that of light through celestial space, or 200,000 miles per second of time ; but later experiments in the United States of America have shown that the velocity of the current through suspended iron wire is only 15,400 miles per second, which last rate is above half the circumference of the globe.†

To the fact of deflection Schweigger made the addition that, by passing many times round circular wire, the deflecting power of the current is multiplied, and the sensibility of the instrument increased. A complete circuit is made by the electric current with each message ; but Steinheil found that the earth, if moist, or the sea, or a river might be employed without the return wire to complete the circuit.‡ This discovery was verified by Messrs. Wright and Bain in 1842, who, in experiments made on the Serpentine in Hyde Park, showed not only

* Quarterly Review, June, 1854.

† Ibid., p. 124.

‡ Is this correct ? With return wire the current completes the circuit ; but have electricians established that the circuit is completed through land or water, or both ? Rather is not the electric fluid dissipated on entering either medium ?

that water will transmit a galvanic current, but also that the moisture of the earth in its natural state is sufficient for the purpose.* The submarine telegraph followed; and in the autumn of 1851, a monster wire cable, weighing 180 tons, and 24 miles in length, was stretched along the bed of the Channel, from the South Foreland in England, to Sangatte, in France, bringing London and Paris with other continental cities into momentary intercourse.

The first telegraph line patented proved a successful speculation. Professor Wheatstone received 30,000*l.* in cash from the Telegraph Company. Mr. Cooke had 96,000*l.*, principally in shares, and dependent on the success of the enterprise. The undertaking succeeding, Mr. Cooke realised the entire sum. It has been imputed to the Company, that they have, to save expense of change of apparatus, failed to develop the invention of which they were the foster parents. Both Mr. Highson's gold-leaf telegraph and Mr. Bain's punctured-paper telegraph have been purchased by the Company, but neither brought into practical use.†

These are the chief incidents and progressive seps in the evolution of the new mode of postal communication. Countries differ in the mechanism of their telegraphs, but they are all based on the amazing speed of the electric spark, and its deflective property in passage by the magnet. One is at a loss whether thought itself or its electric vehicle is the more extraordinary phenomenon. Both are wonderful. It is a peculiarity of modern civilisation that no sooner is a discovery made, than its useful applications are rapidly maximised by the concurring intelligence of nations, and its benefits made universal. Electric telegraphs

* Companion to the Almanac for 1848, p. 69.

† The Electric Telegraph, by W. F. Cooke, Esq.

are now the established messengers of Europe and America, and partly of Asia. In peaceful utilities the United States are seldom behind, and frequently take the lead in energy of execution. In 1853 they had formed thirty different telegraph companies; and telegraphic lines had been laid not only in the old states but the wide-spreading domains of the central and western territory of the Union. Unlike the English system, the American wires are not confined to railway routes, but stretch over vast ranges of country where wide plains and extensive forests abound. Each company employs men to look after the wires, at distances varying from twenty to one hundred miles; and these men examine the whole length of wire, especially after thunder-storms and electric disturbances of the atmosphere.

Nearly all the capital cities and chief towns of Europe have been connected by railways and telegraphic lines. The lightning-post is in progress of being made available across the Atlantic: it already traverses the peninsula of Hindostan, from Calcutta to Delhi, Madras, and Bombay. Over the land and under seas, public events, the flight of criminals, commercial intelligence, and domestic occurrences are in constant transmission. By more frequent intercourse the standard of humanity will be raised, made more equal, and the material wants of one district compensated by the affluence of another. All Europe may be now said to be in presence, to live face to face, and its component nations, by the new auxiliaries of communication, cooperating with general peace and mercantile freedom, likely to be fused into one federative union of communities, separated only by provincial dialects and administrations. During the Peninsular war, the news of battles and sieges were usually a fortnight or three weeks in reaching England from Spain; and the last bloody battle—that of

Toulouse—would not have been fought between Soult and Wellington had the belligerents commanded existing rapid means of communication. In the late Russian war, the events taking place in the Crimea were transmitted almost simultaneously with their occurrence, to Vienna, St. Petersburg, Paris, and London. The spirit of Ariel, to carry thoughts with the speed of thought, has been evoked, and former facts or similes fail in comparison. Eagles' wings, or the flight of the carrier-pigeon, were wont to be dwelt upon ; but they have been outstripped by the new intelligencer, and the poet's stretch of fancy for the annihilation of time and space all but compassed. Imperial and royal speeches, in common with all the business of private life, have no longer to be waited for in anxious or dull delay, but are received almost *vivâ voce* ; and even the blessings of the Vatican have ceased to be dilatory.*

I shall conclude a topic the most remarkable of the present reign, by observing that the earth has become man's ; it was God's gift to him, and he now in fulness possesses it. He has bridged over its seas ; can readily communicate from its most distant corners ; has, with compass in hand, found out where its mysterious magnetic poles are hid ; has scaled its highest mountain-ranges, traversed its widest and most arid plains, and has explored its inlets, islands, and continents, from the icy North to the not less icy region of the antarctic circle. What the ancients knew of the world was circumscribed within the narrow limits of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Medi-

* The emperor Napoleon, in reply to the congratulatory address of the legislative body on the birth of a prince, mentioned the fact of the " blessing of the Holy Father having been brought by electricity in an hour after the babe saw the light," March 16. 1856.

terranean. All their fables and illusions of the horizontal boundary of the earth, of its celestial canopy, and the dark Hyperborean ocean which environed it, have vanished and been put to flight by the lights of modern science and enterprise. Not only has the geography of the globe been mastered, but the products of its surface and the interior records of its pre-Adamite existence have been made available to human enjoyment and research. The Roman citizen was proud of his name ; it preserved him inviolate wherever he went, into distant Albion or obscure Judea : but civilisation has increased her triumphs, and her aegis extends to almost every region. Europeans are personally secure wherever curiosity, the love of pleasure, or the spirit of adventure may prompt them to penetrate. Females can now make the entire circuit of the globe in safety*, or singly traverse the wilds of America, do their toilet in its deep translucent lakes†, or enter the lair of the brave old English gentleman who, axe in hand, pioneered his way through trackless forests. The ascent of Mont Blanc, or a vacation ramble across the Arabian desert, forms the not unusual recreation of civilians‡; and English sportsmen, for the amusement of salmon-fishing, or the chase of the springbok or of Alpine game, will quietly take up their abode in the solitudes of South Africa, amidst the dense forests of Ceylon, or at the foot of the Himalaya mountains.

* Madame Pfeiffer alone has twice made the overland tour of the earth.

† Mrs. Jameson's Canadian Travels.

‡ Author of *Eothen*.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

QUEEN VICTORIA.—CONTINENTAL REVOLUTIONS OF 1848.

State of France in 1848.—Discontents of the People.—Government of Louis-Philippe ; its Difficulties, and arbitrary Character.—Three Days' Insurrection in Paris.—Risings in Berlin, Vienna, and Milan.—Failure of the general Fermentation, and the Reascendancy of the Military.—Communism in Paris ; its subversive Theories.—Dreadful Conflicts with the Red Republicans.—Prince Napoleon elected President of the French Republic.—Alarm of the National Assembly at Democratic Tendencies ; three Millions of Electors disfranchised.—Struggle for Ascendancy between the Prince President and the National Assembly.—The Military occupy Paris, and the Assembly is dissolved.—New Scheme of Government promulgated by the President ; the Empire reestablished in the Person of Napoleon III.—Policy and Popularity of the French Emperor.—French Loans.—Effects produced in England by the Continental Revolutions.—Famine in Ireland ; subsequent improved State of the Country.—Discoveries of Gold in California and Australia ; their Influence on the Progress of States and Colonies.—The World's Fair, or Great Exhibition of London ; its signal Success.—Comparative Claims of Nations.—The Universal Exposition of Paris in 1854.

NEARLY contemporary, or in close continuation with the surprises in Electricity and Travel, noticed at the conclusion of the preceding Chapter, were fresh vicissitudes in revolutionary France. The expulsion of Charles X., and the accession to sovereign power of the younger branch of the Bourbons, in the person of Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orleans, did not prove a final or very satisfactory settlement. The government of Louis-Philippe had, with the firm support of the middle classes, subsisted eighteen years, but it had been a perturbed period. externally peace was maintained, and internally France

was prosperous, but continued subject to vehement political agitations. It was imputed to the king that he had violated his implied compact with the people on his accession, and had rendered his rule monarchical not only in form but administration. Unceasing insurrections ensued in Paris, Lyons, Rouen, and Lisle; they were suppressed chiefly by the national guard. No fewer than seven attempts were made upon the life of the king. It was impossible that his government could maintain itself in face of such unrelenting hostility without additional safeguards. These were sought by precautionary or severe repressive measures — the fortifications of Paris, and the September laws of 1835, by which the independence of juries and the freedom of the journals were violated. By legal coercion or direct bribery the Press became little better than a state engine; and so completely was the irresponsibility of the crown established, that the mere avowal of republicanism was made an offence, and all mention of the king in respect to any political measure, except in praise, was prohibited. Offences of the press were made triable by the Chamber of Peers; and if the accused were sentenced to imprisonment the sentence might be enforced in France or any colony — Algeria, for instance. These guarantees were deemed by their authors, the Duc de Broglie*, MM. Thiers and Persil, essential to the maintenance of order and peace, against the sedition of the ultra journals and the unceasing attacks of assassins and republicans.

For the perpetuation of this arbitrary system a power-

* Address of the Duc de Broglie to the Chambers, August 4. 1834. The French ministers seized the opportunity afforded by the atrocious attempt of Fieschi on the life of the king, to strengthen the executive power. The Parisians facetiously termed the new dungeon and gagging bills *les lois Fieschi*.

ful machinery was organised under the two divisions of force and corruption. Of the first the chief element was a large standing army, and an omnipresent police officered by the dependants of government. The second lever of power consisted in a lavish public expenditure. It was an appeal to the baser passion of human nature, to the most ignoble form of seduction — pecuniary gain. The economy of governments is usually a safe test of their value, and their expensiveness increases with their demerits. Despotisms cannot win, only buy services; hence the most hateful forms of rule are always the most squandering. The Orleans dynasty was peculiarly so; with his eleven palaces, Louis-Philippe lived in a style of more wasteful ostentation than any of his royal predecessors, but with fewer of their illusions to disguise it. Next was an immense host of *employés*, 600,000 in number; and, as the number of registered electors was only 200,000, it left three places for each voter to aspire to. Here were ample resources for influencing the elections, and securing a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Other influences controlled the legislature, not less adverse to the patriotic discharge of its duties. Various monopolies exist in France very obstructive to commerce and industry, but which could not be opened without detriment to the rival interests of Louis-Philippe and many of the deputies, as the owners of vast forests and extensive coal and iron works. Under such auspices any proposition for free trade, and a liberal interchange of French wines and luxuries for English coal and iron, was not likely to be favourably listened to by the *juste milieu* administration of the *doctrinaires*.

The general summary of Orleans rule is, that it was, beyond example, expensive to the people, not from the pursuit of any national benefit or popular fascination,

but in the support of arbitrary power by large armies and profuse patronage. Next, it was an irresponsible domination; all the checks and the vigilance that ought to have been exercised over it by the public press or parliament were neutralised or conciliated by open corruption. Thirdly, it comprehended in its action only partial interests, not the general weal; it was the interests of placemen and monopolists, not of the community, that were predominant in both the chambers and the executive. Lastly, the government was one of reaction, not of progress; it was not Young but Old France of which Louis-Philippe was enamoured, and which his policy tended to revive by ambitious family alliances and diplomatic relations. It certainly had one redeeming excellence in its love of peace; and in this respect it approximated to the government of Sir Robert Walpole under George II., and which it also resembled in its unscrupulous resort to sinister means for the carrying on public affairs. Only a few months before the revolution of February, 1848, the French press and Chamber of Deputies had been occupied with the exposure of jobs and examples of ministerial cupidity. The ministries of both M. Thiers and M. Guizot were irreparably damaged in public opinion by the disclosures of 1847—of the sale of peerages and the bartering of ministerial patronage for shares in joint-stock companies.

In much of this there may have been the exaggeration of faction, and a counter-presentment may have been possible. It is difficult to obtain the authentic materials of history. In private memoirs there is suppression, the rest diluted or varnished over. Contemporary journals and testimonials consist chiefly of semi-information, lies, or misconceptions, false or distorted views of the moment. Solon modestly said of his laws,

that they might not be the best possible, but that they were the best the character of the Athenians admitted of framing. In common with Sir R. Walpole the policy of Louis-Philippe may have been prescribed by the exigencies of his position. In the personal qualities of both there were many redeeming traits; more especially perhaps in Louis-Philippe, who was of exemplary probity and amiability, of vast experience, great wisdom, and firmness of resolve. Those who act in a high sphere are seldom free, or have the requisite leisure for defending themselves, and must submit to be misunderstood or misrepresented. They are not all so fortunate as Napoleon at St. Helena, who had opportunity for making his own rejoinder to calumnies, and vigorously used it.

That the Orleans government was bad both in principle and practice there can be no hesitation in conceding; but whether a better was practicable will, perhaps, best appear in the sequel. It is certain Louis-Philippe's administration was profligate enough to rouse the ire of moderate citizens, and make them favourable to reform. In fear of anarchy and foreign intervention they had borne deception and misrule for seventeen years. But patience has its limits; and the limit of endurance seems to have been reached when an arrogant minister, elated by a long term of power, refused the smallest concession, even to allow the question of reform to be agitated. The results of M. Guizot's mistaken conservatism were the memorable events which followed, — a tremendous insurrection of three days' continuance, the flight of the citizen king and his Calvinistic misleader, the proclamation of a republic, and the nomination *vivâ voce* of a provisional government consisting of Dupont, Arago, Lamartine, Pagès, Ledru-Rollin, and Cremieux.*

* Intoxicated by prosperity, men are apt to forget their own

The example of the Paris insurrection was electric, and a corresponding energy and unity of classes drove out or mastered the ruling powers at Vienna, Berlin, Milan, and Rome. The year 1848 will ever be memorable in history, and is fertile in lessons both to princes and people. The popular risings in the continental capitals could not, unseconded by prevalent opinion, have achieved such triumphs. It shows that the European mind had been revolutionised—that it was ripe for change—and that the nations of the continent had become dissatisfied with the irresponsible license of hereditary power. Had the fermentation abroad been casual, or without just cause, it might have been regretted as a profitless disturbance of the general tranquillity; but such does not appear to have been its true character. France may have accelerated, but can hardly be charged with the production of the simultaneous movements in Germany and Italy; and her example in 1848 would have been as little contagious as in 1830, had not the elements of commotion been previously accumulating. In brief, the convulsions of the continent were the natural efflorescence of the long tranquillity of Europe. Paradoxical as it may appear, the victory of Waterloo had been the active revolutionist; it had conferred on Europe its greatest blessing in the longest peace on record; and peace is the great benefactor of nations. It is in peace

lessons. Speaking of the fanatical efforts of Charles I. to force the English liturgy on Scotland, M. Guizot remarks (*History of the English Revolution of 1640*): “The attempt had that issue, which has often, in similar cases, been the sorrow and astonishment of the courtiers of despotism; it failed at the point of apparent success.” Just so Louis-Philippe’s government failed, when apparently (for real it could not be on so rotten a foundation) most assured by force, intrigue, and corruption.

only that nations really progress in material enjoyments, in mind, in freedom, justice, and universal charity. In common with other countries Germany and Italy had partaken of these advantages, and very naturally rose against the stagnant corruptions, superannuated tyrannies, and childish superstitions by which they had been enslaved. Their efforts were not wholly fruitless. The oppression of tithes, game laws, serfage, and other remnants of feudalism, were surrendered to the popular appeal. The chief error of the people was in attempting too much; in not resting at an intermediate stage of progress, in lieu of plunging at once from despotic power into an impracticable democracy, with which neither the existing intelligence, traditions, nor interests of communities could amalgamate. Their precipitancy caused disunion of classes and weakened the means of resistance, by which the military power was enabled everywhere to regain its ascendancy; not, however, without leaving an abiding impression that an energetic opinion had been awakened and organised, which would not tamely submit to privileged injustice and misrule.

France succeeded in establishing a republic, but immediately after was beset with formidable difficulties. The victory over the Orleans oligarchy had been won by the people, and they naturally, according to the measure of their ideas, sought to concentrate in themselves its fruits. But not content with their political triumph, they sought to reconstruct society on new foundations. In contempt of the diversified aptitudes of human nature, of economical science, and ages of experience, an unprogressive equality was sought to be made the sole pervading feature of social existence. There was to be no variety of life, no precedence, no gradation of rewards, or of classes: all were to be equal on the same low and stagnant level.

In commerce there was to be no enterprise, in industry no emulation, and for genius no distinction. Under the guidance of such notions there could neither be individual nor national prosperity. They were the theories of cooperation of Fourier and Robert Owen, and appear to have been extensively imbibed by the *ouvriers* of Paris. They gave rise to the national workshops of Louis Blanc, at which 150,000 persons were at one time employed, all paid by government. The interests of civilisation were endangered by the outbreak of this social barbarism, and both property and intelligence revolted against it. The usual sequel in France of class dissensions followed, in an appeal to physical force, and the dreadful conflicts of citizens and soldiers in the month of June. They were the most bloody and desperate of all the revolutionary insurrections of Paris. Almost every street was a battle field, defended by barricades. The military, under the command of Cavaignac and Lamoricière, aided by powerful artillery, proved victors. The slaughter was frightful; 16,000 killed and wounded, among them the Archbishop of Paris, who fell a victim in his vain endeavour to allay the fury of the combatants.

It was the downfal of Communism, but new revolutionary phenomena followed. The republican constitution of 1848 was based on universal suffrage, the National Assembly being elected by the votes of all Frenchmen twenty-one years of age. It introduced a new performer on the stage, in the person of the nephew of the Emperor, who was soon destined to take a leading part. The antecedents of Louis Napoleon had not been prepossessing; but the election of him first by several departments at once to the National Assembly, and next his election by a large majority to be the head of the republic, attested

that he inherited in popular estimation all the traditional glories of his celebrated uncle.* His great popularity had been an object of jealousy from the first, and M. Lamartine had moved in the Assembly his banishment from France. This was negatived ; but it disclosed to Prince Napoleon where his great strength lay, and made him retired and undemonstrative at the outset of his presidency. But enough had been discovered, with other concurring indications in Paris, to show that the indiscriminate extension of the franchise had given too democratic a tendency to the government. It gave rise to the law of May 31. 1850, by which all voters who had no fixed domicile were disfranchised. By this law the suffrages of three millions of electors were suppressed. Measures were also adopted for curtailing the popular character of the press, by subjecting publications to a stamp duty, if published at short intervals, or of less quantity than two sheets. These reactive proceedings were of course unpopular with the masses, and left an opening for the counter-projects of the prince president. In his message to the Assembly, Nov. 4. 1851, he proposed the repeal of the electoral law of the preceding year, and the reestablishment of universal suffrage. This proposal was rejected Nov. 13th, by a majority of six only, 353 voting against it, and 347 in its favour. Mean-

* The most dazzling fame only penetrates slowly to the depths and confines of society. Napoleon remarked, at St. Helena, that he believed there were persons living in France who had never heard of his name, and that his renown only reached its zenith when myriads of books, busts, and pictures, had spread it into the obscurest rural abode. This is possible among the obscure vine-dressers, who

Led the noiseless tenor of their way
In the sequestered vale.

while, reviews of the army were had at Satory and St. Denis; pending which, by popular condescensions, the wily president sought to win over the military and the populace. Blind indeed would have been the National Assembly had it not penetrated the aim of these seductions, and accordingly a stringent measure was framed for reducing the presidential power, and making plots against the constitution treasonable.

Both parties now understood each other, and had disrobed for the coming struggle; but the adventurous president made the first move, and on the morning of December 2. 1851, France was startled by the apparition of a new revolution. During the night, Cavaignac, Changarnier, M. Thiers, and other public characters known to be adverse to the movement, had been arrested and removed to Ham, or some other distant prison. Paris was occupied by troops, and a proclamation appeared dissolving the National Assembly, and reestablishing universal suffrage, with an appeal to the people, the outlines of a new constitution, and the cause of the president identified with that of France "regenerated by the revolution of 1789, and organised by the Emperor." Resistance was attempted in the capital by barricades, and a popular rising; but the masses being apathetic, and the army obedient, it was easily overcome. France was not wholly indifferent to the usurpation, but she had not the means of effective resistance, her political leaders being in custody, the press silenced, the military cajoled, and the multitude, by the extension of the franchise, conciliated. Before the end of the year, the prince president obtained 7,500,000 votes of approval, and there were only 650,000 against him.

January 14. 1852, Prince Napoleon put forth his promised scheme of government, vesting the executive rule

in himself for ten years ; secondly, establishing a legislature composed of 250 members chosen by universal suffrage ; thirdly, a senate of from 80 to 150 members, composed of the chief officers of state, and his own salaried nominees. Under these forms the government became an organised despotism, with the semblance but none of the realities of freedom ; and the national guard, courts of justice, municipal councils, the universities, public education, and religious establishments, were all in succession moulded in conformity with this successful stroke of revolutionary violence. "Liberty, equality, fraternity," which had been inscribed on the public edifices of Paris, were erased, and became the popular cajoleries of a past generation. Only one will and one law was supreme, the fiat of Prince Napoleon.

By a rapid succession of decrees the titles of the nobility were restored ; the property of the Orleans family directed to be sold ; the five per cent. rentes to be reduced to four and a half per cent. ; the import duties on coal, coke, and iron lowered ; and M. Thiers permitted to return to France to complete his "History of the Empire." The decretal prerogatives appeared unlimited, and, like those Sir William Blackstone ascribed to the British parliament, omnipotent.

Imperial power had been reinstated, and the sequel of this strange reaction was only a change of names. But in rising to the climax, appearances were not wholly disregarded. From the consulate to the empire, an interval of four years elapsed ; but the rapid strides of the prince outstripped those of the exile of St. Helena, and from the presidency to the empire only twelve months intervened. The ultimate purpose was thinly disguised, and the entombment of the republic not consummated without the solemnity of a funeral oration, and eulogy upon its futili-

ties. Upon the installation of the legislative chambers, March 29. 1852, the president disavowed his intention of restoring the empire. "Let us," says he, "keep the republic; it menaces nobody, and reassures every one." But in the November following, the senate was assembled, when the president said, that "to resume the imperial symbol is for Frenchmen a great fact; it is a guarantee for their interests, and a satisfaction for their pride." The supple senate acquiesced, with only one dissentient; and the question of the revival of the imperial dignity in Louis Napoleon was referred to the French people. Their votes were taken on the 21st and 22nd of November: ayes, 7,864,189; noes, 253,145. The prefect of the Seine proclaims the establishment of the empire from the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. The emperor, Napoleon III., makes his triumphal entry into Paris. The senate fixes the civil list of the emperor at thirty millions of francs. All is done or undone, as will be differently construed.

There was policy in dispatch; what every one foresaw impended it was best to fix at once. Happily the catastrophe appears to have given to France what was least foreseen but most desired—stability and repose. These were not likely to emanate from the National Assembly; in one chamber, elected by universal suffrage, it was an impracticable government, unsatisfactory to the people by its apprehension of them, and divided in its own bosom by obstructive factions. With the exception of ardour for internal improvements, in harbours, roads, and railways, for which it granted large sums, the Assembly had been barren of public benefits. If not dissolved, its divisions had been likely to ripen into a fierce anarchy, for which a dictator would have been the probable curative. Emboldened by the popular favour, based on dazzling

traditions, Louis Napoleon bore away the prize for which rival parties were intriguing, and by daringly anticipating inevitable issues may have averted their calamities. The price paid has been enormous, but time may mitigate the payment. The first great acquisitions of justice and freedom in 1789 have not been wholly compromised ; nor does this seem a probable political issue,—they are too closely and by too many ties identified with the public interests. France must needs be satiated with revolutionary experiments ; and a happier career is open to her than military glory, and which she appears not indisposed to run, in the development of her agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. Industrial progress may gradually recover all that has been sequestered ; it made England what she is—the world's model of deliberate but assured progression.

French revolutions, like the electric current, are rapid in completing their circuit from freedom to despotism, and from despotism to freedom again. The imperial settlement holds out hopes of rest. Experience is not to be disregarded, and past errors it is affirmed are to be shunned. War is held to be an episode ; peace, commerce, and the local improvement of cities and towns have been announced to be the normal regimen of the empire. That the government of the Emperor has been popular is certain, by the least questionable of all tests. What people will give or contribute is a fair measure of zeal and of trust in authorities. Pending the Russian war the Emperor raised two loans : in the first 500,000,000 francs were asked for, and 2,175,000 were subscribed ; in the second the loan was 750,000,000 francs, and 3,652,591,985 francs were subscribed, or nearly five times the amount required by the government. Of this amount no less than 231,920,155 francs were made up of subscriptions of fifty francs and under. Foreign countries subscribed

600,000,000 francs. These results seem to establish the general popularity and stability of the imperial government both in the estimation of Frenchmen and of foreigners.

France again an empire was the great abiding fact of the political movements of 1848. England only slightly participated in the convulsions of the continent. There were meetings and processional demonstrations by the Chartists in favour of universal suffrage and vote by ballot, but the weakness of these attested that the strength and general contentment of the community were coexistent with established institutions. In Ireland the outbreaks were of a more violent type, but they were so deficient in practical purpose and so futile as not to require special designation. In this country, so long the great perplexity of imperial government, a revolution was in progress far more efficient for her welfare than any movement within the power of agitation to effect, or the wisdom of human legislation to devise. A dreadful famine, from the failure of the staple food of the people, formed the proximate source of deliverance. Parliament and the generous sympathies of England rendered all the assistance possible ; but this terrible visitation was not stayed before a million of the population had perished from want and its resulting maladies. The people were horror-stricken at the twofold calamities of mortal disease and deprival of subsistence, and fled in shoals from the place of their birth as a land accursed, in which hope had ceased to dwell.

Emigration to the amount of half a million * thus concurred, with a slaughtering pestilence, to mitigate the chief obstruction to the progress of Ireland, which was

* By the census of 1841, the population of Ireland was 8,175,124 ; in 1851, it was only 6,515,794 ; being a decrease of 1,659,330, or 20 per cent. in the last decade from the famine and emigration.

redundancy of inhabitants beyond existing means of employment and support. Four-fifths of the people were dependent for a livelihood on rural industry ; but the culture of the soil was impeded by the tenure of land, that did not afford scope or encouragement for its improvement, and partly by the embarrassed condition of its owners, who had neither capital to improve their estates themselves, nor were free, from being fettered by legal settlements, to convey them to others possessed of more ample funds. These latter embarrassments were met by judicious legislation ; and in two years from the commencement, in 1849, of the vigorous working of the Encumbered Estates Act, 440 estates had been set free, by sale, to the great relief of their nominal possessors, and no small joy of their creditors. By this extraordinary concurrence of incidents affecting the employment of the people and the culture of the soil, Ireland became truly progressive, and began to taste the sweets of a substantial prosperity. Wages approximated to the English level ; the death struggle for petty holdings of land diminished ; and a tempting field for the investment of capital was opened to speculation.

Contemporary or closely following the advances of Ireland, arose in a more distant region industrial and social influences of a different but not less remarkable description. The possession of gold is chiefly of importance to society as the instrument of exchange, and any increase or decrease of the amount in circulation has only the effect of causing a greater or less quantity to be employed in the performance of its monetary office. As a question of mercantile convenience, an addition to the total quantity of gold in circulation depreciates its functional utility, by requiring a greater bulk of the metal to be used in commercial exchanges. This is the general

result of an increase in the precious metals—their utility in commerce is lessened. But though the world at large may not be benefited by an augmentation in the supply of gold, the sudden possession of it by a country may confer upon it special advantages, by rendering it a central attraction to population, commerce, industry, and the useful arts. Places before desolate may thus spring into rich and flourishing communities. These have been precisely the results which have followed the recent auriferous discoveries made in California in 1847, and in Australia in 1851. Colonies and territories previously little known or cared for have been transformed into thriving emporia, towards which cupidity and enterprise have been impetuously directed. It was not only the Anglo-Saxon race which was quickened into greater life, but the inert Chinese roused themselves from their torpor of 1000 years for a chance of participation in the golden harvest. California had, only just before the discovery of some glittering particles in the mud of the Sacramento river, been ceded by Mexico to the United States. The news soon reached Francisco, and thence through the Union to Europe. The noble harbour of San Francisco, previously unoccupied, was soon crowded with ship-loads of adventurers; while on the land side it was invaded by hardy backwoodsmen, who had braved all perils in scaling the Rocky Mountains. Francisco was soon peopled; it became a city in earnest, with streets, mansions, warehouses, hotels, and gambling-houses.

In Australia the geological features of its mountains had suggested to Sir Roderick Murchison and others the probability of their containing gold ore. It was first found near Bathurst, next in Victoria; and its transforming power proved quite as extraordinary as in the western Dorado. Victoria had only been settled in

1834, and was principally occupied in wool growing. But its staple industry underwent immediate change by the turning up of gold at Buninyong, Mount Alexander, and Ballarat. At the latter, a man got 31 lbs. of gold in one day; and in a twelvemonth 48 tons of gold were dug up in Victoria. It was expected that the annual produce of the province would be five, and that of the Bathurst township three millions. At the latter diggings, a nugget or lump of gold was turned up 106 lbs. in weight.* Under the seductions of such stimuli, one can hardly wonder at the marvels of progress in Australia, and that a stream of emigration should set towards it from all parts. By the congregation of adventurers, Melbourne, Geelong, and Sydney began to rank with some of the thriving hives of the parent state in their number of inhabitants, banking firms, public buildings, educational and recreative establishments.

England shared in the prosperity of her distant settlements, by the extended employment it gave to shipping, in the export of commodities. From 1850 to 1854, the shipment of British goods had increased from about two millions to upwards of ten millions. The total produce of gold in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, in Victoria and New South Wales, amounted to 46,192,573*l.*† It is probable nearly an equal amount of gold has been procured from the longer worked auriferous beds of California, making a total of 100,000,000*l.*, or, if converted into coin, an addition of two-fifths to the amount of gold coin previously supposed to be in circulation.‡ Such an enormous increase would in ordinary course assuredly have told on prices, and produced a similar augmentation in the nominal

* Companion to the Almanac for 1853.

† Supplement to the Spectator, March 1. 1856.

‡ Companion to the Almanac for 1853, p. 28.

value of commodities as ensued on the discovery of the mines of Spanish America in the sixteenth century. But no such disturbance of trade or incomes has been experienced ; and the rough estimate of a writer in the "Times," of prices being enhanced $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by the gold discoveries, probably exceeds the amount. For this unimportant effect various reasons may be assigned, in the facts that only a portion of the bullion has been minted ; a considerable portion has been used in the production of articles of luxury and utility ; a part has been substituted for silver money, from alteration in their relative value ; and that the effect on prices has been diverted or neutralised by the contemporary increase in population, and the production of exchangeable commodities. Lastly, a more influential cause than any which has been assigned for the contrasted results on prices, may probably be found in the prodigious difference in the amount of wealth at the two periods ; consequently, the less effect likely to be produced by the addition to the circulation in the nineteenth than in the sixteenth century.

Leaving economical inquiries on the tendencies of the gold discoveries, let us turn to another memorable influence on industrial enterprise. The great political fermentation of 1848-9 seemed to threaten a long term of violent commotion ; but, like the rage of a choleric man, it soon passed away, and the nations again became tranquil. In 1851 all were at peace, and intent on peaceful pursuits ; and it was under these auspicious aspects that the World's Fair, or Great Exhibition of London, was celebrated. It appears to have owed its germinal origin to a suggestion of the meritorious Society of Arts, and forms a signal distinction of the Queen's reign, to whose example, and under the judicious superintendence of Prince Albert, it

was eminently indebted for success. But the design, immediately its purpose was understood, met with universal favour, and proved highly exemplary of the amicable and civilised sympathies existing among people and their rulers. Hardly a state or colony existed which did not lend zealous aid to the completion of the undertaking, and May 1st disclosed a spectacle of unprecedented novelty and grandeur. The Crystal Palace in which the fair was held, was perfectly unique in conception and execution, and had the aerial glitter of a creation of fancy; while it formed an apt and capacious repertory for the various works of art and manufacture collected under its furrowed roof. It was termed a *fair*; but, unlike such gatherings, its object was not traffic, but a comparative exhibition of works of skill and climate, for the mutual benefit of all nations. Prizes were awarded to the most excellent in art or manufacture by juries composed of natives and foreigners. The number of exhibitors was 15,000. In machinery, in hardware, in glass and porcelain manufactures, the British exhibitors gained more prizes than the entire aggregate of strangers. In textile fabrics, in the fine arts, and in miscellaneous manufactures, the foreign exhibitors bore away the honours, in the ratio of three to two. But in the production of raw materials for food and manufactures foreigners gained nearly four times as many prizes as the British.* These, however, are only relative indications, and not conclusive of merits. England was on her own ground, and had the largest share of articles for competition; but she had entered the lists against all comers; and though in art and skill, if not in taste, she might be a fair match for the best, the climate of England could not be expected to compete in raw

* Companion to the Almanac for 1843, p. 39.

materials with the exhaustless variety of nature in all other latitudes.

The two great civilised nations of the West again entered the lists, on a changed site, in the Universal Exposition of Paris, in 1855. In this second grand attempt at an international fair, the English idea, as might be expected, was more developed, and the classification more perfect. In comparative physiology the French division was complete and unrivalled. Some comparative results were unexpected, and such as juxtaposition only could have brought out. The French machinery department was superior ; and there were other examples of unexpected foreign progress. Belgium, for instance, was distinguished by her locomotives, as France was for steam machinery. But the Parisians were astonished by Minton's ceramic wares, which, for beauty and variety, exceeded anything they had thought possible in English art-manufacture. Nor were they less surprised by our art-workmanship in silver, which took precedence of all by the skill of Vechte, an artist-workman of a London firm. The superiority of English agricultural implements was readily conceded, though among ourselves it is only considered that we are at the commencement of mechanical appliances in the abridgment of rural labour.

The parent Exhibition of the British metropolis gave rise to exhibitions in Dublin and New York ; and one has been announced for Vienna in 1859. A more direct offshoot, and intended to preserve the memory of the first, in form and purpose, was the erection, by private enterprise and devotion to intellectual arts, of the magnificent Crystal Palace of Sydenham, which continues in course of development, and presents an unique spectacle of beauty, science, and artistical illustration.

The great London Exhibition of 1851 was under the

direction of Royal commissioners, assisted by committees and a host of employés. It continued open 144 days, and had 6,170,000 visitors, whose payments for admission more than defrayed all attendant expenses. The Exhibition building covered an area of nineteen acres in Hyde Park ; and the greatest number of visitors to it in one day was 109,915. It closed without any serious accident, in peace and general satisfaction to all parties, after a display appropriate to England ; and, in conjunction with her wonderful metropolis, left an impression which it was desirable to make on foreigners, namely, that the national interests had not suffered by devotion to freedom in our institutions, commerce, and navigation.

CHAPTER XXXV.

QUEEN VICTORIA.—WAR WITH RUSSIA.

Sudden Vicissitudes in European Affairs.—Differences between Turkey and Russia; the Holy Places.—Russia claims a Protectorate over the Greek Subjects of the Porte.—Aggression on the Danubian Principalities.—Intervention of France and England.—Futile Attempts at Negotiation by the great Powers.—War declared against Russia by England and France.—Concessions to Neutrals.—Naval Blockade of the Russian Empire.—Invasion of the Crimea by the Allied Armies.—Battle of the Alma, and Siege of Sebastopol.—Peculiarities in the Situation of the Fortress, and the Crimean Peninsula.—Capture of the Mamelon, and of the Malakoff Tower.—Subsequent Position of the belligerent Armies.—Inutility of more protracted Hostilities.—Changes favourable to Peace; Death of the Emperor Nicholas.—Alexander II.; his Address to the Nobility of Moscow.—Difficulties of France and Russia.—Pacific Indications of the French Emperor; his Address on closing the Paris Exhibition.—Grand Naval Review.—Peace Congress.—Treaty of Paris; its important Guarantees for Ottoman Independence.—The Firmans of the Porte.—Declaration of Maritime Law in War.—Privateering abolished, and Neutral Rights extended.—International Arbitration mooted by the Congress; its probable Influence on European War.—Losses of the Armies in the Crimea.—Civilisation the sure Source of Power in War and Peace.

THE remarkable vicissitudes of the preceding septennial period were rapid in transition, as the changeful views of a landscape on a summer's day from a fleeting cloud over the celestial luminary. The younger branch of the Bourbons unexpectedly disappeared, and, after the brief interlude of an experimental republic, was replaced by the empire and the dynasty of Napoleon. The expulsion of the Bourbons was immediately followed by that of other old royalties of the continent; but they were as

suddenly reinstated in power by the regular armies commanded by Windischgrätz, Wrangel, and Radetsky. The quietude of monarchical despotism was thus restored in Germany* and Italy, and all the attempts made at representative governments defeated. England continued unmoved amid these revolutions, but it, too, was identified with extraordinary events, favourable, however, rather than adverse to progress, by the discovery of the gold fields in her Colonies, the unexpected impulse given to the prosperity of Ireland, and the splendid triumphs of her great international Exhibition.

But the last was speedily followed by a reverse manifestation wholly unexpected. No one foresaw that the friendly intercourse established among nations, and exemplified in the World's Fair, was destined soon after to be seriously interrupted. Cordial relations had apparently been cemented for a lengthened term by reciprocal hospitalities, which held out the prospect of a long interchange of peaceful benefits. All the great states of Europe had zealously concurred in the international gathering, and freely lent their aid to give *éclat* to the Exhibition. The emperor of Russia was conspicuous, and contributed beautiful specimens of malachite and of the rich sables of his empire. Austria shone in magnificent domestic furniture and ornamentation.

* A decree of the Federal Diet, April 12. 1855, required the governments of Germany to bring their state constitutions into harmony with the monarchical principle. In obedience to this decree the King of Hanover annulled the constitution given in 1848, and also the provincial électoral law of 1850, thereby diminishing popular rights to the measure of the constitution of the late King Ernest. Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and other German states, together with the vacillating Grand Duke of Tuscany, in like manner revoked the representative constitutions they had granted in the moment of defeat or apprehension.

France and England, it is needless to observe, were abundant in articles of utility, elegance, and mechanical ingenuity. All did their best, according to the genius, taste, and natural capabilities of the several communities. But these pledges of future amity and goodwill seem to have been forgotten or compromised by the rise of misunderstandings, which had disastrous issues. What is most observable is, that the rupture of the general peace appears to have been not less adverse to the interests than the inclinations of the sovereigns. The pride of none of them had been hurt; no personal feud or dislike subsisted between them; like the disputes of private persons, the disagreement began in the veriest and most irrelevant trifle, which, through arrogance and self-will, was suffered to ripen into open hostilities.

The little cloud first rose over the Holy Places. France had obtained from the Porte concessions in favour of the Latin Church, at Jerusalem; and Russia sought similar indulgences in favour of the Greek Church at the same place. In the settlement of the conflicting claims of the two churches the Sultan appears to have been, in the estimate of the Czar, not so liberal or complaisant in his dealings with him as with the Emperor Napoleon. The Porte tendered amends for this apparent slight, and which seem to have been accepted; but not forgotten. Prince Menzikoff was despatched to Constantinople, and the object of his mission only partly disclosed; it was said to refer exclusively to the Jerusalem churches, but was found to involve questions far more important, and which the prince studiously concealed. The demands that Russia now made extended to all the Greek churches of Turkey, to which belonged several millions of its population, and the substitution of her own authority in place of that of the Porte in matters pertaining to ecclesiastical govern-

ment. These demands were enforced with a threat of Russian coercion if not implicitly, and without the alteration of a word, complied with in the space of a week.*

To such insulting dictation submission, with national honour, was impossible. Compliance with Prince Menzikoff's peremptory note would have manifestly been subversive of the independence of Turkey, and made the Sultan only a vassal-partner with the Czar in the government of his dominions. Certain privileges had been conceded by the Porte to its Christian subjects, and were guaranteed by treaty with Russia; but what the emperor now aspired to was to be pope in Turkey as well as in his own territory, and to exercise the same indisputable authority in the East that the see of Rome in the Dark Ages exercised in western Europe. The Porte offered fresh securities for the religious privileges and immunities of Christians; but, this tender being made in concert with the great powers of Europe, not directly and specially with Russia, it was rejected.† Following up the menace of self-redress, the Russian army crossed the boundary line of the Pruth, July 2nd, and in the same month took military possession of the Moldo-Wallachian provinces as a "material guarantee" of Ottoman humiliation. This open violation of treaties, and defiance of the usages of civilised states, was met by the counter approach of the combined fleets of England and France towards the Dardanelles. As the only alternative against unprovoked aggression, the Porte, September 27., declared war against Russia, and the allied fleets advanced to Constantinople. November

* Note of Prince Menzikoff, May 3. 1853.

† Declaration of War by England, "Gazette," March 28. 1854.

30th, the Russian admiral Nachimoff surprised and destroyed the Turkish ships of war lying in the roads of Sinope. Pending these occurrences, concerted efforts continued to be made by England, France, Austria, and Prussia for the re-establishment of peace, and the maintenance of the Ottoman empire as an essential element of the balance of power. These endeavours failed; in one instance from the Czar being dissentient, and in another from the adverse construction put by the Porte on a joint note of the four great powers, and agreed to by the emperor Nicholas. It was only a phrase of the Vienna note of December 3rd that the Porte demurred to, upon the ground of its being open to the inference that the concessions made in favour of its Christian subjects might be construed to have emanated from Russia, rather than the free grace of the Sublime Porte.

The crisis had now arrived. Pacific negotiations had been exhausted in futile efforts, before and after the commencement of hostilities between Russia and Turkey, to reconcile their differences. The Czar was in the wrong; and France and England resolved to take part against the aggressor, by making a peremptory demand for the evacuation of the Danubian Principalities, refusal by Russia to be considered a declaration of war.* Austria and Prussia concurred in the justice of this summons; but, though more nearly concerned than the two Western Powers in checking Russian aggrandisement, they declined to commit themselves to hostilities with the autocrat of the North in the event of non-obedience. The haughty Czar not only refused obedience, but exhibited a contemptuous arrogance. After perusing Lord Clarendon's letter con-

* Earl of Clarendon's Note to Count Nesselrode, February 27. 1854.

taining the summons, he said to Count Nesselrode that “ it did not become him to make any reply to it.” *

Peace without mean subserviency, like that of the two leading German states, to Russian domination, was impossible. The declaration of war by the Queen of England was in frank and intelligible language, setting forth the grounds of hostilities, and appealing to the sympathies of the people with “ right against wrong, to save Europe from the preponderance of a Power which has violated the faith of treaties, and defies the opinion of the civilised world.” In the same Gazette was the announcement that, to render the war as little onerous as possible to states remaining at peace, the property of neutrals at sea would be respected, even if found on board an enemy’s ship ; nor would enemy’s property, laden on board a neutral vessel, be liable to seizure. Letters of marque were not to be issued ; and the operations of war were to be restricted to the regularly organised forces of the country. There was policy as well as humanity in waiving the old belligerent pretensions to the right of search and privateering ; they had ceased to be expedient, in face of the great maritime power which had risen in the West, and whose ships floated in every sea. Russian ships in British ports were allowed six weeks to clear out ; and in every respect the commencement of the war was signalised by more civilised preliminaries than the precipitate violence which marked the rupture of the peace of Amiens.

It was apprehended that hostilities might be protracted, and their eventualities involve all Europe ; but two years sufficed to accomplish every purpose of the allied powers.

* The exact words of the Emperor, as reported by Chancellor Nesselrode, were,—“ L’Empereur ne juge pas convenable de donner aucune réponse à la lettre de Lord Clarendon.” (*Consul Michele to the Earl of Clarendon, March 19.*)

The brief struggle will be memorable in history from important incidents, and the negation of many anticipations. It showed that the long peace had not enervated European nations, and that they were as capable as ever, or even more so, of patient endurance, and heroic deeds. At the outset the emperor of Russia declared that the war on his part should be defensive; and in the main this prudent resolve was adhered to. Battles with alternate success were fought by the Turks and Russians on the Danube; but after the gallant resistance of two months by Silistria, and the joint declaration of Austria and Prussia not to permit Russia to advance beyond Schumla, the Principalities were evacuated by the invader, and offensive operations by Russia ceased on the Danubian frontier. Constantinople was thus safe; and the combined armies of France and England, first assembled in the vicinity of Constantinople, and next at Varna, on the shores of the Black Sea, were free to transfer the scene of war to the Crimea. In this famous peninsula the whole interest of hostilities became concentrated, the spirited expeditions to the Sea of Azoff, to Kinburn, and in defence of Kars, contributing auxiliary diversions pending the more vital struggle. There was no sea fight; not a single ship of war belonging to Russia ventured on a cruise, nor was it possible in face of the strict blockade established at every port of the empire. Limitless as was the sea-board of Russia, it had no outlet either for ships or trade; in the White Sea and the Black Sea, from the Baltic to the extremity of Siberia, the empire was sealed up. It was, in fact, under naval siege; and this state of duress, humiliating and adverse to imperial interests and freedom, must alone, ere long, have brought the Czar to amicable terms. But it may be doubted whether only a bloodless

mode of settling the Turco-Russian quarrel would have been satisfactory to any dominant party. The gallant armies collected in Bulgaria would hardly have been pleased to return without once measuring swords with the foe ; nor is it probable either that the people of France or England would have been satisfied, had the vast armaments which they had fitted out returned undistinguished by any hostile effort or exploit ; so that the trying events of the Crimea were probably an inevitable and unavoidable sacrifice to the martial dispositions of mankind.

With the exception of the capture of Bomarsund by the brilliant dash on the Aland Islands, and the bombardment of Sweaborg, the marine war had been as harmless as the most ardent disciple of Peace could wish. In this branch of the service the Czar was perfect in defensive tactics—a *friend*, indeed, whom no insult could provoke. Our noble galleons, the pride of the nation, were nonsuited in both seas, with credit, however, to the discretion, if not to the past renown of reckless daring in our naval commanders ; but assuredly they ought to have foreseen that three-deckers, unaided by smaller craft, were not the right description of force in the shallows of the Baltic and Black Sea : consequently what a naval fight of steamers may be remains an untold tale. But two conclusions have been obtained for future edification,—that line-of-battle ships, without the auxiliary of gun boats, are only for deep waters, and even there, and so aided, are a dubious match for skilfully-built marine fortresses of granite.

It is the land war with Russia which will form an imperishable chapter of history. The memory of the eleven months' siege of Sebastopol, and of its prelusive or attendant battles of the Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman,

and the Tchernaya, will never die. The Crimea, the old *Taurica Chersonesus*, was classic ground before ; but new associations have been stamped upon its plateaus, ridges, and ravines by recent occurrences. Jerusalem, Saguntum, Rhodes, St. Jean d'Acre, Badajoz, and Saragossa are familiar examples of beleaguered cities ; but they have not the interest of Sebastopol. It is the intensity of the conflict between well-matched combatants, more than its magnitude, which creates the deepest sympathy. The Crimean struggle was condensed in an area less extensive than the plain of the Troad ; but, as in the real or fabled Trojan war, the warriors were fed by external supplies. It was the battle of Armageddon, in which three of the greatest modern empires fought, within the confines of a circus about the size of a French commune or English parish, by all the means of war and science, for the mastery. In proximity of resources, but not in the means for their conveyance, Russia had the advantage over the **Allies**, whose munitions lay at the distance of 1000 leagues ; but for both parties the war, from its limited battle-field, failed in the more dazzling glories of combat. There was no base, no opening for those grand strategic combinations which, by their overwhelming results, gave *éclat* to the campaigns of Napoleon. It was principally a contest of military engineering ; and in this the Russians displayed inventive genius—in their curtained embrasures, rifle pits, and redoubtable mud forts. But it was no new discovery that earthworks, twenty feet feet thick, are less destructible by cannonade than solid masonry ; or that a thin wall, which allows the passage of missiles, is not so easily battered down as one of greater thickness. Experience had long before demonstrated these facts in gunnery ; but the erection of the Mamelon battery and the Malakoff tower were bold conceptions, and the

greatest errors of the Allies were in supinely allowing these formidable works to be constructed under their eyes, and within reach of their fire. The sequel of the siege proved that the keys of the fortress were there; and immediately they were mastered the south side of Sebastopol was evacuated. The debarkation in the Crimea, at the outset, by the Allies, seems to have been arranged and executed with admirable forethought, precision, and celerity. Nor less deserving of honour was the night encampment and march to the Alma, the scaling of whose threatening heights rivalled in daring that of the Heights of Abraham by the immortal Wolfe. Our nimble allies performed well their part in their wonted brilliant style; but the firm step of the British grenadiers was irresistible, and the rise of their fur caps over the Alma ridge must have been as appalling to the Muscovite hordes as if a drove of their own ursines had been ready to burst upon them. Whether the north or south side of Sebastopol was the most eligible site after the victory, or whether Sebastopol might have been taken by a *coup-de-main*, involve contingencies the military elements of which could only have been ascertained by trial. Of the bravery and ardent zeal of the British in every branch of the service there can be no doubt, however great may have been personal or administrative deficiencies, resulting from a long peace, the local perplexities of the Crimea — fickle climate, rocky soil, and the dreadful maladies, more fatal than the sword, which unceasingly tracked their steps. These trials awakened home sympathies; and the name of Florence Nightingale and assistant ladies will live as long as any record of the siege of Sebastopol. Nor less imperishable will be the memory of the brave Lord Raglan, who, with noble fortitude, gallantly withstood an accumulation of trials which none foresaw, under which Marshal St. Arnaud

sunk, and from which Canrobert, another French marshal, his successor, withdrew.

The capture of the Malakoff, September 8., was the Trojan horse, and seems to have left no other attainable object in the Crimea. The Russians still held unassailable positions on the north side of the town, and the Mackenzie heights above the Tchernaya ; by the prompt resolve of the Russians in sinking their war-ships at the mouth of the harbour, the combined fleet continued excluded ; and the possession of Sebastopol did not afford shelter from the enemy's guns. The expedition to Eupatoria and the sea of Azoff had failed to intercept the Russian communications with Perekop. A long pause ensued ; the line of the Tchernaya was carefully reconnoitred by the Allies, but no feasible opening discovered. Why incur dreadful risks without certainty of success or of some important acquisition ? The expulsion of the Russians from the Crimea, and the possession of the entire peninsula, would only have been a perplexity to the Anglo-French alliance. The standing menace against Constantinople had been destroyed by the destruction of Sebastopol, its magazines, docks, and arsenals. Neither England nor France wanted aught from Russia, nor Russia anything from the Allies. The remaining objects of the war were secondary ; negotiation might settle them : why then continue it after the awful sacrifice to Moloch already made ?

Interrogatories of this kind appear to have forcibly presented themselves to the belligerents, in the autumn of 1855, and inclined all their hearts to peace. There had been previous attempts in negotiation at Vienna, in concert with Austria ; but beside this and the altered position of the armies after the capture of Sebastopol, other changes had occurred favourable to a pacific issue. The great potentate whom vast and absolute power had

made arrogant had been struck down; the emperor Nicholas, whose aggressive pride had occasioned the war, was no more. He had laboured hard, and as few other men could labour, for the good of his empire*, and

* M. Kohl's "St. Petersburg," which records favourable traits of Nicholas.

The Emperor, in conversation with our ambassador at St. Petersburg, said,— "You know the dreams and plans in which the Empress Catharine was in the habit of indulging: these were handed down to our time; but while I inherited immense territorial possessions, I did not inherit those visions, those intentions, if you like to call them so. On the contrary, my country is so vast, so happily circumstanced in every way, that it would be unreasonable in me to desire more territory or more power than I possess: on the contrary, I am the first to tell you that our great, perhaps our only danger, is that which would arise from an extension given to an empire already too large."—*Letter of Sir G. H. Seymour to Lord J. Russell, Jan. 22. 1853. Secret Correspondence, Parl. Papers, Sess. 1854.*

The emperor likened Turkey to a "sick man," on the verge of dissolution. But though the Ottoman empire evinced signs of extreme decrepitude, he does not appear to have been eager to hasten its political death. The last war with Russia terminated in 1829; since that time there had been uninterrupted amity between the two empires, and so little cupidity did the Czar evince for territorial acquisitions from Turkey, that he surrendered without equivalent to the Sultan (*Marshal Marmont's Present State of the Turkish Empire*, p. 313.) Silistria,—that city from which he experienced his first great reverse in the war, chiefly from the gallant bearing of the two military correspondents of the "Times," Captains Nasmyth and Butler. In his conversations with Sir H. Seymour, his views appeared prospective, contingent on the spontaneous breaking up of Turkey. In these his tone was haughty enough; if the autocrat did not prescribe what should be, he did the negative in imperial style:—

"Well," said the Czar to Sir H. Seymour, "there are several things which I never will tolerate: I will begin by ourselves. I will not tolerate the permanent occupation of Constantinople by the Russians: having said this, I will say that it *never shall be held by the English, or French, or any other great nation.* Again, I never will permit an attempt at the reconstruction of a Byzantine empire, or

understood its true policy ; but in the vain cupidity of European dictatorship, in the prescription of constitutions and territory, had compromised its interests. The vas-salage of Austria, and his family alliances with the German states, had extended his power or his influence from the Neva to the Rhine. Emboldened by his continental sway, he had set at defiance the two great Western Powers by an aggression, under religious pretexts, in which his own royal relatives and political dependants refused to support him. But the long arm of England in concert with France reached him ; and death only saved the Czar from the humiliation of their victories. His successor was not bound by his errors ; and he embraced an early opportunity of bringing back Russia to her normal state of peace, commerce, and internal improvement.*

such an extension of Greece as would render her a powerful state; still less will I permit the breaking up of Turkey into little republics, asylums for the Kossuths and Mazzinis, and other revolutionists of Europe: rather than submit to any of these arrangements, I would go to war, and as long as I have a man and a musket left would carry it on. These," the Emperor continued, "are at once some ideas; now give me some in return." (*Letter to Lord J. Russell*, Feb. 22.) He let drop in another part of these curious colloquies, that he might, if not permanently, occupy Constantinople *as trustee*; this, coupled with the emperor's speaking of Austria as absorbed in Russia, and the vast amount of warlike stores accumulated in Sebastopol, and the ease with which an armament from that fortress could reach the Turkish capital (*Marmont's Turkey*, p. 127.) before aid could arrive either from France or England : all these were doubtless enough to excite suspicion of the real designs of the emperor, and to show the expediency of grappling in time with the colossus that sought to bestride the world.

* " I prefer the real prosperity of the arts of peace to the vain glory of combats. I have just opened the ports of Russia to the commerce of the world, and its frontiers to the free circulation of foreign produce. I desire that henceforth the exchange of commodities of all kinds from our own produce, whether raw or manufactured,

The French emperor had preceded Alexander II. in pacific announcements, and declared the war to be an “episode” in the career of France. Upon closing the Paris Universal Exposition he evinced impatience that so fruitless a struggle should be protracted, and, that peace might be hastened, called upon Europe to pronounce which of the belligerents were in the wrong.*

To both empires the war had been afflictive. In France provisions had become high in price; the loans of the emperor had been especially hurtful to internal industry, from the small amount of the subscriptions made admissible, and withdrew capital from its most productive channels of employment. Public opinion in France was unquestionably in favour of peace. In Russia, agriculture and commerce languished through the immense drain of men for the war, and the foundries, factories, and workshops had been compelled to close. There was extreme difficulty in obtaining supplies for the army, from a murrain which had raged among the cattle. The finances of Russia were exhausted, and money could only be raised at heavy discounts on the continental exchanges. These were the admissions of the Russian emperor in his Moscow address. England was the least eager of the combatants for the termination of hostilities: none of her

may take place with the greatest facility.”—*Alexander II. to the Nobility of Moscow, after ratifying the Treaty of Paris.*

* “On beholding,” said the emperor, to the commissioners of the Exposition, “the marvels spread before our eyes, the first impression is a desire for peace. Peace alone, in fact, can develop in a greater degree these remarkable products of human intelligence. You must therefore, like myself, entertain a wish that this peace may be speedy and durable.” (November 15. 1855.) On opening the Exposition, May 15., the emperor, in his address, said, “In inviting all nations hither, I have desired to open a Temple of Concord.”

principal industrial interests had suffered, many of them had been quickened in activity by the stimulus of war expenditure ; and the popular sentiment was decidedly in favour of hostilities — one more campaign at least. The country, in fact, was only beginning to be in earnest, after discovering administrative deficiencies, and was energetically preparing with vastly augmented means to assume an irresistible attitude. In the absence of a compulsory conscription, like that of France and Russia, our greatest difficulty had been in promptly increasing the regular army by voluntary enlistment. It drove the Government to the establishing of recruiting dépôts on the Continent and in the Colonies, and to the hire of Turkish and Sardinian contingents. But these first obstructions had been surmounted ; and in the spring of 1856 England was ready with an array of vastly augmented armaments, naval and military. She had begun the war with a nucleus of only 10,000 gallant men. It had been augmented to 100,000, of which 70,000 were in the Crimea, in renovated health, strength, and discipline, ready to open the campaign. Our ships of war, when hostilities commenced, only numbered 212 ; when the war ended they numbered 590. "The trident of Neptune is the sceptre of the world ;" and Queen Victoria certainly wielded it when, at the grand marine display at Spithead, after the Peace (April 23rd), she reviewed a fleet extending twelve miles, mustering 3,800 guns, 40,000 men, moved by a steam power of 33,720 horses. It was science, riches, and the heart of the people in the cause that had extemporised this magnificent naval review. It sufficiently showed that it was not any necessity which rendered the British government desirous of peace, but motives as honourable and disinterested as those which had impelled the country to the resort of arms. Unques-

tionably the policy of England is pacific, as is that of every nation not barbarous enough to aspire to domination, as old Rome did, by plunder and violence. But neither the thirst of dominion, false glory, the seductions of augmented power and patronage from the war, nor popular applause, were sufficient to determine the course of the Palmerston government. The passion for war has, in truth, become less of a royal pastime than a rage of the populace of nations ; and to all its illusive or mistaken inducements, ministers preferred the more substantial blessings for England and the rest of Europe, of peace, if honourably attainable.

It was under these amicable aspects, presented by England and the other belligerent powers, that a more peremptory effort was made to terminate hostilities. Austria proposed a basis of negotiation : it was accepted by France and England ; and the two latter powers prepared the draft of a treaty of peace, which Austria tendered to Russia, with the ultimatum that she would join the Allies if the Czar was dissentient.* But Russia promptly acceded ; and a congress of Plenipotentiaries assembled at Paris, February 25th, 1856. Its first act was to stop the war by an armistice ; next, to discuss the terms of a definitive treaty of peace. For the space of a month all was hushed ; not a particle of reliable intelligence escaped of the deliberations of the Conference. At first an imperfect copy appeared of a definitive treaty of peace from some perfidy in the printer ; and next, the genuine document, signed, on the 30th of March, by the ministers of England, France, Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, and Russia. On the 27th of April, ratifications by the sovereigns were exchanged at Paris, and Europe was again at peace.

* The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Agricultural Meeting, Oct. 1, 1856.

The Treaty comprised thirty-four articles, with subsidiary conventions, declarations, and protocols. Its matter is well arranged, its purport clearly and distinctly brought out, and its language more neat and simple than is usual in such documents. The introductory article provides for the mutual restitution of conquests, the surrender of prisoners of war, and an amnesty to all who have participated in hostilities. The rest comprise the more important terms of settlement.

All the securities demanded by France and England were conceded. The independence of Turkey was fully guaranteed, not only by the general treaty of Paris, but by a subsequent treaty of April 15th between England, France, and Austria, by which the contracting parties bound themselves jointly and severally to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire against aggression. By the war all former treaties between Turkey and Russia had been annulled, and the Porte relieved of any claim of the Czar to a protectorate over the Greek population of Turkey. In favour of the Sultan was a rectification of the boundary line in Bessarabia, by which Ismail and the Danube are made protective of the Turkish frontier. For the first time Turkey is made a full participator in the public law and system of Europe; and in case of dispute with any of the contracting powers, before force is employed, the dispute must be referred to the rest for mediation. In return for emancipation from an ambitious and powerful neighbour, the Porte communicated to the Conference a firman, in which the Sultan sets forth his intentions to improve the condition of his subjects without distinction of religion, language, or race, so that Greek and Mahometan may be identified in civil rights and privileges. But the contracting powers (Article IX.) disclaimed all right, collectively or separately, to inter-

fere in the internal administration of the Ottoman empire.

Subsequent appearances seemed to indicate that the avowed intention of abstaining from intervention in the internal government of Turkey may, in face of the prejudices and interests of the dominant party of Mussulmans, tend to avert the practical benefits of the new charter. But the great powers could not assume a protectorate over the Greek subjects of the Porte without following the example of Russia, whose similar claim had been the principal cause of the war. The firman, however, has been made, by its recognition in the Treaty, a kind of European guarantee of equal rights to the population of Turkey. Under it all classes are made equal before the tribunals of justice, the sittings of which are to be public. The civil and military schools of the state are thrown open to the entire community. No corporal punishment is to be inflicted in prisons, except as the law prescribes; and everything resembling torture is abolished. Obstructions to agriculture and commerce are to be removed; and for improvement in both, the spirit and experience of Europe is to be followed. The firman was issued February 21. 1856, and the proclamation of it in the Great Council of Constantinople created intense interest.

The concessions made by Russia in the Treaty to European interests are of vital importance. Among them is the free navigation of the Danube, by which its trade will meet the railway extensions of Austria, and connect the interior of Turkey with the commercial world. The Black Sea is opened to every state; no vessels of war are to float on its waters, except as limited for the purpose of police; no marine fortresses are to be erected on its shores, and consuls are to be admitted into its ports. The

former law and right of the Sultan is established, to close the Dardanelles against ships of war of whatever nation.

The concessions made by England to future peace, are comprised in a "Declaration on Maritime Law" during war: it is in the second convention annexed to the Treaty, and declares:—1. Privateering is abolished. 2. The neutral flag covers enemy's goods, with the exception of contraband of war. 3. Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband, are not liable to capture under an enemy's flag. 4. Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective; that is, maintained by a force sufficient to prevent access to the coast of the enemy. The principal of these had been spontaneously conceded by England, before the commencement of the war. The immunity of neutral goods under an enemy's flag is a new concession from military law to commercial law, and narrows belligerent privileges. Against the claim of neutrals that the neutral flag should cover an *enemy's* goods, Britain had contested against united Europe, combined with the American Union, but had virtually surrendered it when she gave up the right of search. At a later period the American government proposed to extend the new maritime principles, so that the private property of a belligerent nation be protected at sea during war the same as on land. The proposal, as communicated by Mr. Marcy, is that to the "Declaration of the Paris Congress be added the following words:—‘And that the private property of the subjects or citizens of a belligerent on the high seas shall be exempted from seizure by public armed vessels of the other belligerent, except it be contraband.’" This addition met with a favourable reception in England; and with reason, since we are likely to have more capital afloat liable to capture in war than any other nation.

Lord Clarendon, the able and high-principled minister of England, brought under the notice of the Conference a question which has been agitated since the time of Henry IV. of France, and has been strenuously inculcated by an influential party in this country. It was to recognise the principle of international arbitration as a substitute for war, and which was introduced as a corollary to the article in the general treaty already noticed, in which the Porte engages to submit a dispute with any of the contracting parties to the mediation of the rest before resorting to arms. His lordship's proposition was favourably received ; and Count Walewski, the French minister, said he was authorised to support the idea as " being fully in accordance with the tendencies of the age."* The Austrian minister, Count Buol, objected that it might fetter the independent action of his government. Eventually the proposition was qualified, and agreed to by all the parties in this form :—

" The Plenipotentiaries do not hesitate to express, in the name of their Governments, the wish that States, between which any serious misunderstanding may arise, should, before appealing to arms, have recourse, as far as circumstances might allow, to the good offices of a friendly power. The Plenipotentiaries hope that the Governments not represented at the Congress will unite in the sentiment which has inspired the wish recorded in the present protocol."

This establishes nothing positive for the present ; but it adumbrates a principle hitherto held in diplomacy as wholly visionary, and which may ripen into a substantive form of international appeal.

Wars in Europe, in fact, appear to have reached almost their natural terminus, and are unlikely in future to be of frequent recurrence. Religious, commercial, and colonial

* Protocol, No. 23.

wars may be said to have already ceased. Nations have become more intent on the interchange of material benefits than on the infliction of mutual injuries. European states stand nearly on the same level of civilisation, are equally skilled in military science, and equally fearless of bayonet or bullet. Hard knocks can only be exchanged by belligerents, and nearly an equal amount of detriment be inflicted. Were the conquest of one community by another possible, it is doubtful whether their fusion would be an advantage to either, and whether they would not both be happier and more prosperous each subject to its own peculiar laws, institutions, traditions, and usages. But such a catastrophe as the subjugation of one nation by another is next to an impossibility, since all the rest of Europe would combine to resist such a disturbance of the existing long established allocation of territory. The war with Russia is an instance of the instinct of self-preservation which governs the members of what may be deemed a proximate European federation. For more than a century, Russia had been the dark cloud in the East which was thought to overshadow and menace the independence of the Western States. But the united arms of England and France dispelled the phantom danger, and a long period is likely to elapse before either the constitutionalism or the territory of Western Europe will be menaced or interfered with by Muscovite restlessness or ambition.

Beside the humiliation of Russia, and the other benefits noticed, further results of the conflict may be recapitulated. Austria has been rescued from Muscovite thraldom ; Napoleon III. has become a fixed star in the monarchical galaxy of Europe ; the constitutional government of Sardinia has been raised into European consideration ; Sweden has been made secure by a treaty stipu-

lation against the re-fortification of Bomarsund ; and the anomalous condition of Greece and Italy, in which last Austria and France, without a shadow of right, continue to divide between them the Pontifical States, has been so far discussed as to elicit from the Conference the admission that the state of both Greece and Rome continued, as originally avowed, to be provisional only, and not a permanent settlement.

The martial reminiscences of the war are little dazzling, and not likely to provoke imitation. The science, endurance, and heroism of the combatants, on both sides, are beyond impeachment ; but they recal Dr. Johnson's powerful lines on the foundation of the warrior's pride,— “the ignoble strand, to point a moral or adorn a tale,” on which Charles XII. of Sweden, the most redoubtable of modern heroes, met an obscure death. The Duke of Cambridge, who led in gallant style his division to the Alma, declared repeatedly, on his return from the Crimea, that “soldiers do not love war ;” they prefer the joys of peace. The losses of the English army in the bloody struggle were small contrasted with those of her opponent. They amounted to 19,314 men in all the casualties of the service ; but of this number only 209 officers and 3323 men were killed, or died of their wounds.* The losses of our brave ally were much more considerable, being as follows :—officers of all grades, 1284 ; non-commissioned officers, 4403 ; soldiers, 56,805.† In an elaborate report made by the French Minister of War to the Emperor (October 23.) it is stated that France sent to the East 309,268 men, and received back 227,135. The effective strength of the French army of the East on the day when the peace of Paris was

* Lord Panmure, House of Lords, May 8. 1856.

† Report in the “Moniteur de l'Armée” in July.

signed is stated to have been 146,240. The losses of the Russians from various causes have been computed at the enormous amount of 500,000, of which number 90,000 lay buried on the ensanguined heights of Sebastopol.* The havoc of war mainly results from diseases, long marches, night encampments, and mental anxiety ; from most of which the Allied armies were saved by the cooperative aid of the British navy. Of French and English troops our ships conveyed to the seat of war in the Crimea 221,000 men. The Czar's forces perished wholesale in traversing dreary wastes and ill-made roads; besides which, they were poorly fed, and, if knocked up, they were but crudely aided by medical appliances. Lord Ellesmere has with reason stated that a single well-directed line of railway would have made Russia more formidable to her assailants than all the ships, guns, and stores which the late Emperor had been for years vaingloriously accumulating in his fortresses† by the impoverishment of his subjects and the diminution of the productive capital of the empire. Manifestly the civilisation of science, of wealth, and freedom are the true sources of power in war and peace.

* Viscount Palmerston, House of Commons, May 8. 1856.

† House of Lords, May 6. 1856.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION, AND PRESENT ASPECTS.

Chief Agencies conducive to England's Greatness.—The Aristocracy and Productive Orders.—Past and Present Civil Agitation.—Fusion of Classes and Concurrence of Purpose.—Decline of Parties, from Settlement of Great Questions, and Harmony of the Productive Interests.—Unequalled Prosperity of Agriculture and Commerce.—Elements of National Strength.—Quietude of the Religious, Philosophical, and Literary World.—No Symptoms of National Degeneracy from the pervading Social Harmony.—Tendency to Refinement among the Masses.—Characteristics of Crime; Increase of Property, and Diminution of Personal Offences; Reform of Offenders.—Reform of Oxford and Cambridge Universities.—Preliminary Examination of Candidates for Civil Offices.—Disposition to look through Mediæval Spectacles.—New Palace of Westminster.—Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Old Masters.—Prospective Metropolitan Improvements.

THE narrative, in which the general principles of a great nation's progress has been sought to be elucidated by the leading facts of its history, has conducted us to the actual present. The series of changes which have been traced in the successive struggles and vicissitudes of a gathering of islanders from barbarism to civilisation, might not be inaptly displayed in its scenic characteristics in one of those moving spectacles that often attract popular attention. At two former historical epochs—the revolution of 1688, and the accession of George III.—a retrospective summary has been given of existing or antecedent advances; and with those may be now combined the ulterior steps, so as to bring into conclusive results the chief agencies that have been conducive to England's greatness.

To the aristocracy of society has been principally ascribed the fabric of our political, ecclesiastical, and judicial institutions; but what chiefly pertains to material developments is as certainly due to the Productive Orders. The moral and social attributes which give to strangers the general impression of the national character, do not appear to belong exclusively to either denomination of the community, but have resulted from their amicable fusion; and, indeed, it may be remarked of our entire past history, that if divisions have arisen—and occasionally fierce ones have occurred—they have been short-lived, and the pervading characteristic in British advancement has been union and concurrence of purpose. If the productive classes not only created themselves, but by industrial results tended to refine and elevate those in authority, the latter did not in hostile spirit decline to share with them, when competent from intelligence and position, any exclusive immunities they had inherited or acquired. Gradual advancement, moderation in demands, and an equitable compromise of them if conflicting, have been the distinguishing features of parties. In the Plantagenet era it was the sword that arbitrated antagonistic claims; at the Protestant reformation, persecution and the faggot or, later, civil disabilities; in the spirited struggle with the Stuarts violence continued the paramount appeal; but in our more enlightened times a trial of logic or eloquence in the senate or on the platform suffices to determine conflicting issues.

This is a bright gleam of existing civilisation,—reason in civil agitation has become paramount to physical force. It is the pen and the tongue, not the sword, which arbitrates. The fruits of this pacific victory are everywhere around us, and it is impossible to contemplate them unmoved. Next to actual war political questions form the

most engrossing, if not most profitable, topics of public interest ; but they appear substantively settled, and only fragments remain upon which the most adroit agitation can operate with any hope of remunerative return. As in the reduction of the regiments of a great army on the return of peace, *état majors* of the parties may be still kept up, but the main body of their respective forces is dispersed and gone. A rally is sometimes attempted, and a stray drum may be occasionally heard, with a cry of "lo here!" or "lo there!" but no adequate seduction is offered to obtain a following sufficient, either in numbers or vital warmth, for prolonged existence. But though present political aliment and distinctive party symbols may be wanting, past services ought not to be forgotten ; and the leaders are not few or unworthy who have disinterestedly struggled for the common weal from the times—

"When through the British world were known
The names of Pitt and Fox alone."

The salutary spirit of concession to equitable claims has tended to corresponding quietude among the great productive interests of society. All that antagonism and jealousy which subsisted under a system of monopoly and preference has disappeared by the substitution in their place of equal freedom and justice. Agriculture, commerce, and manufacture are no longer felt to be adverse, but allied ; their interests mutual and concurring ; and both dependent on freedom of action and emulation of effort.

The result of this judicious policy has been extraordinary prosperity in the chief material interests of the empire. Agriculture is considered to have made greater advances within the last ten years than in the preceding half-century. The same stimuli which had proved

beneficial in trade and manufactures have given an impulse to rural industry. A spirit of association and enterprise has been awakened among the parties most interested in the land, and capital and skill, chemical and mechanical science, sought to be made available to its improvement. These advantages have been made common and diffusive by competitive exhibitions, and the formation and annual meetings of agricultural societies in all parts of the kingdom. British agriculture as well as commerce has thus attained a high comparative rank, and equals, if it is not superior to, that of any other country. Although husbandry is the predominant industry of France, the Paris Exposition of 1855 established clearly that it cannot compete with that of England either in implements, relative productiveness of cereal produce, or in the size and quality of its live stock. But a wide margin remains at home for further advances by application of skill, science, and capital. In England only it has been stated*, that in the single item of under-draining one hundred millions might be advantageously expended, a sum about equal to the entire cost of the Sebastopol war with Russia.

Agriculture is only entering on its career of development, and still requires strenuous efforts. Less than a century ago England was an exporter of corn; it now annually imports to a large amount. A vast addition has been made to the cultivated land of the country (p. 552.), but the numbers of the people and the rate of individual consumption have increased in a still faster ratio than arable husbandry.† Since about the year

* Mr. Denton, Society of Arts, Dec. 12. 1855.

† Mr. C. Hoskyns lately stated to the Society of Arts that in the first forty years of the present century three and a half millions of

1840 five distinct sources of improvement have been made available. First, the introduction of the use of guano; secondly, the publication of the works of Liebig; thirdly, the establishment of the Royal Agricultural Society; fourthly, the adoption of an improved system of drainage; and lastly, the application of steam and improved implements in reaping and ploughing. The co-operation of all these resources with the awakened spirit abroad, can hardly fail ere long to make cereal produce coadequate with the national consumption.

Commerce has long been progressive, and its prosperity an accomplished fact; but since the abandonment of the protective policy it has advanced at an accelerated pace. Its progress was checked by the continental fermentation of 1848, and again by the two years' war with Russia; but, save these interruptions, it has been rapidly extending during the last ten years. In 1846 our exports amounted to 57,700,000*l.*; in 1855 to 95,500,000*l.*; and in the first seven months of 1856 they amounted to 64,000,000*l.**, exceeding the whole annual export of the last year of the corn-laws. In the current year our foreign trade is likely to be double that of the United States, and to exceed in the amount of export the aggregate exports of France, Austria, Russia, and Spain together, the four largest states of Europe, and whose population is eight times that of Great Britain.

It is obviously not by the amount of population or extent of territorial area that national strength and resources ought to be computed. Mere numbers of people acres had been brought into cultivation against an increase of nearly six millions in the population of Great Britain. (For previous years, see p. 552.)

* Mr. Cobden's Letter, Sept. 17. 1856, to the Free-Trade International Congress at Brussels.

may be an exhaustive element, as Ireland recently established; and a widely extended empire be a source of speedy exhaustion, as Russia experienced in the Crimean war. It is in the concentration of forces, material, moral, and free, that national power and capabilities are comprised; and in these elements England is unrivalled.

Turning from material indications to social aspects, existing prospects are satisfactory. Those features of mutual amity which have been remarked between the urban and rural classes, seem to pervade the rest of the community. There is little of strife or violence anywhere, unless it be among the victims of intemperance. In the absence of more substantial temporal interests the vacant public arena has been mostly occupied by theological or sectarian controversies; but the peace of the religious world has become not less profound than in the prosperous reign of George II. This quietude is not the result of spiritual indifference; for it is a fact that more churches have been built within the last fifty years than in the preceding five centuries, while the chapels of Dissenters have multiplied in number and capacity in an equal or greater ratio.

Under Queen Anne philosophers were divided upon the Newtonian discoveries; and the followers of Sir Isaac Newton disputed, with the disciples of Leibnitz, the priority of discovery of the fluxional calculus. It terminated, as controversies on priority of inventions often do, by the victory not being exclusively awarded to either claimant, both these distinguished mathematicians—English and German—being found to have been simultaneously occupied in the pursuit of an identical result. A similar division of honour seems to have pertained at a later period to Mr. Adams and M. Leverrier in their

anticipative calculations of the sidereal place of the planet Neptune. The most exclusive and recent fields of discovery are undoubtedly those opened by Lyell, Murchison, Sedgwick, and Owen, in geology and comparative anatomy; or in the more sublime revelations disclosed of the vast universe, whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, by the extraordinary space-penetrating powers of the matchless telescope of the Earl of Rosse. But on all sides tranquillity prevails in the culture of the natural sciences, unless the lunar agitation on the phenomenon of the lamp of night, which, like an accomplished courtier, always maintains an unaverted face towards its superior luminary, may be held exceptional.* In the walks of Literature there is a corresponding stillness; and the vivacious fancy of Alexander Pope would find it difficult to collect the materials of a new Dunciad, unless he gleaned, among the extravagances of mesmerism or spirit-rapping, the style frappant, dramatic, or Babylonish, or the idealess no-meanings which puzzle more than wit of Kantean metaphysics.

It is gratifying to observe that the prevalent Harmony of classes is unassociated with symptoms of national degeneracy. Although there is peace, social and international, there is no general tendency to effeminacy or exuberant luxury. The heart and intellect of the community are as vigorous as under the Plantagenets, or in the fervid civil rage of the seventeenth century. Individual respect is maintained, but generally with courtesy and toleration for the dissentient preferences of others, in taste, politics, religion, or recreation. In this reciprocity there may be as little compromise of principle as of direct interest; still the result

* Mr. Symons, Cheltenham Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Aug. 6. 1856.

has been to render society vastly more agreeable. Abstinence in external presentments from what is offensive or corruptive, is certainly a virtue *per se*; the form may beget the real, if it is not, and may be supposed to approximate to what Mr. Burke intended, when he said that vice in the higher classes was divested of half its grossness by refinement in indulgence. If this be correct of the times of Mr. Fox and George Selwyn, the grace of *de-corum* has become much more exemplary since, and is no longer limited to the aristocracy of Bath or Tunbridge, but extends in different degrees to most classes, from the Thames to the midland and northern counties. Inebriety is the most gross outrage on good manners, and indecency is its least offence; but it is impossible to help thinking that a frailty which so directly impeaches both the taste and understanding, is in course of diminution. The example of others who are superior, and the intrinsic merits of Temperance itself, are such that it must penetrate downwards to those gradations with which it continues almost the exclusive opprobrium. To such anticipations the manifest direction of the popular preferences for the fine arts, botany, horticulture, and music, vocal and instrumental, under the instruction of Mr. Hullah, is promising. Intellectual or useful education has ceased to be the sole aim; popular refinement is aspired to; and certainly one of the most gratifying social aspects of the time is the liberality with which some of the most distinguished and next to the highest in power, by opening their galleries of art and delivering edifying discourses, have sought to aid the common movement. It was a sage remark of the Rev. Sydney Smith, that "the healthy state of a country might be judged of by the union of the great with the many."

One blot on the national escutcheon, adverse to these indications, is often adduced in the increase of *criminal*

offences. The subject has been previously glanced at (pp. 395. and 500.) under circumstances not greatly different from the present. The direct tendency of affluence is to give additional force and scope to the human passions, not only in a more rapid evolution of saints and philosophers, but of thieves and swindlers. But this is perfectly consistent with a predominant civilised progress ; and of this England affords a demonstration, in the fact that though offences against property have increased, those against the person have diminished. This is a positive gain on the darkest side, in personal security being better assured, though property offences have increased from the increase of riches and of opportunities for their wrongful appropriation.

The criminal calendar is not a test of civilisation, but only of the poverty or wealth of a community and of its predominant occupations, whether commercial or agricultural. Where there is little chattel property or trade, there cannot be much theft either from the person, house, warehouse, or in transfer ; where there is little agency, embezzlement and breaches of trust must seldom occur ; and where men, as in rural countries, form a fixed gradation liable to few unexpected vicissitudes of fortune, they are exempt from the temptations or extremities of condition to which sudden wealth or indigence is exposed. Hence, it is apprehended, may be traced the prevalence of crimes against property in England. We are a mercantile people, rich, enterprising, industrious, and emulative ; the range for plunder is wide and seductive, and the affluence or necessities of individuals frequently sudden or urgent ; and this is apt to render them reckless in enjoyment and ostentation, or of the means they employ to better their lot or repair their disasters. Conversely, we are comparatively a moral and enlightened nation, and this accounts for the second trait of criminal propensity in the

relative fewness of offences against the person. Crimes of violence or outrage, indicating savage depravity of heart, are proportionably fewer in this country than on the continent. Our offences are commercial, like our pursuits; they are not crimes of revenge, jealousy, lust, or mere atrocity; but forgery, coining, cheating, fraudulent insolvencies, and joint-stock speculations on public gullibility. Our crimes indicate less of depravity than of a culpable mode of acquiring those objects which are in general request, and form staple social distinctions.

Conformably with the general dispensations of material Nature, the just and the wicked in different degrees participate in the benefits of civilisation. If the enjoyments of opulence have become more diffused, the openings for wrong have multiplied. But one may be legitimate, the other is criminal; and society is justified in devising new protectives if the old ones, from greater dexterity in delinquent arts, have been found inadequate. This at present seems the growing impression. The *Leave-alone* principle was meant for honest pursuits, not to shelter fraudulent devices, which only differ from theft in being more artfully contrived, by which their enormity is aggravated from less liability to detection. The court leets and other local authorities used to form the *ædiles* who maintained the standard of weights and measures, and protected the public from nuisances and adulterated commodities; but they have become dormant or inefficient. Their functions, however, were salutary, and might perhaps be revived and transferred to the detective branch of the police, now that that body, both in the metropolis and the country, is in course of extensive improvement in organisation, discipline, and intelligence. The higher but not less nefarious class of frauds which exuberantly flourish in times of commercial confidence, must, it is probable, be

left to be dealt with by the Newspapers, which not unfrequently contribute both bane and antidote. It pertains to bankers and merchants to be jealous of the honour and integrity of their class, without which opulence must become a mere show, deprived of all genuine respect; and the law aids this discriminative spirit by the parliamentary and other ineligibilities it has annexed to insolvent or dishonest traders and speculators.

In the treatment of more serious offenders, the community appears to be profiting by experience. It is losing faith in the reform of adult criminals, and concentrating its efforts on the establishment of Reformatories and Industrial Schools for the saving of juvenile transgressors. The preference is judicious, and fully warranted by the extensive prison experience of Mr. Chesterton, of the criminal character. There are doubtless casual offenders, who from adverse position in life or delirious impulse have become as it were accidentally criminal; these may be reclaimable, and do better under better circumstances; but for adults, hardened by long practice in their vocation, or succeeding to it hereditarily like gipsies and mendicant impostors, it is chimerical to expect solid reformation. It is only a waste of humanity and resources, like the culture of an ungrateful soil; and when too there are other objects, more likely to yield remunerative returns, soliciting the public sympathies. For the irreclaimable transportation or exile, by which they are relegated from former seductions and opportunities, seems most eligible both for the benefit of themselves and society; and this is apparently the conclusion to which the public mind, after a long suspension of judgment, is tending. The last solace of Hope, however, while life is conceded, ought never to be interdicted even to the most hideous culprit, but the prospect of better treatment for better conduct be held out to all.

Progress is general in criminal arts and meritorious deeds. The marvels of the present, and those which are impending, so far transcend the past that the age is becoming proudly contemptuous of retrospective contrasts. The most cherished prepossessions are successively yielding to manifest superiorities. Classical models and mediæval fascinations are in turn becoming secondary to modern advancements. The imperial spirit abroad has extended even to the great national universities: they comprised hoarded sweets and long and deeply-cherished reminiscences; but under the onward impulse of the present reign both Oxford and Cambridge have been placed in course of renovation, and their educational institutes emancipated from the fetters of grotesque usages, unavailable learning, and obsolete statutes. In this movement there has been no violence, only an effort gradually to carry out the vital spirit of their noble and princely founders, by placing the great universities, where they ought to be, in the van, in lieu of the rear, of advancing science and letters.

It was a needful introduction to the cognate improvement which has prescribed a determinate course of educational acquirements, tested by preliminary examination of eligibility from all candidates before admission to situations in the civil departments of government, and of our vast Eastern empire. A career has thus been fairly opened to abilities and worth in every class, irrespective of creed, class, or connection. Its results cannot fail to be just and satisfactory, not only in the better official administration of public affairs, but by assuring a more accredited competency and character to influential sections of society.

Although intimately connected with the preceding, the directive intelligence of the age has failed to make equivalent progress. The Education of the People appears to

halt in a dilemma from the difficulty in the general acceptance of the simple proposition that religious and secular teaching admit of a division of labour. Such severance, however, is in strict accordance with, and has formed one of the marked and constant features in national advancement from the days of Thomas-à-Becket to the present period. The times certainly have been when the Clergy were the State — when cardinals and lord abbots were equal or superior to kings — when they were prime ministers, lord chancellors, or field marshals; but the pervading tendency has been gradually, from the Anglo-Norman era, to dissever ecclesiastics from such onerous responsibilities, and confine their functional office, as most becoming, to the discharge of spiritual duties. Therefore the main difficulty in the education problem — which, however, I shall not attempt to solve — seems to be identified with the working out of a long settled constitutional principle of national order and development.

In another direction there is an anomalous social aspect, in which the Authorities evince a lingering fondness for viewing objects through mediæval spectacles. If genius in any range ought to be free, it is certainly where taste, fancy, and imagination form almost the sole elements in the appreciation of excellence; but from obliquity of vision in those who have a disposing power it frequently happens that great works, to which posterity will look up for the character of the age, will be found to be only incongruous, servile, or futile imitations of a remote antecedent generation. The new palace of Westminster is an instance. Despite of its unhappy site, it is an imposing pile, has grandeur and novelty in its aspects; but it is an anachronism in style, figure, and ornamentation; and had native talent been free to conceive and execute, there can be little doubt the result would

have been vastly superior, and more worthy and representative of the nineteenth century. The Clubhouses of London, which are mostly gems of architectural beauty, especially the more recent structures, fortunately stand in contrast with the mediæval vassalage that has perverted the design, purpose, and embellishment of the Houses of Parliament. A like conformity to modern life and its utilities may be remarked of several noble metropolitan mansions, of the Royal Exchange, and of many churches and other public buildings, lately erected or in progress, both in town and the provinces; they are superb in taste, classic in style, and fitly embody and present the animus and character of their age.

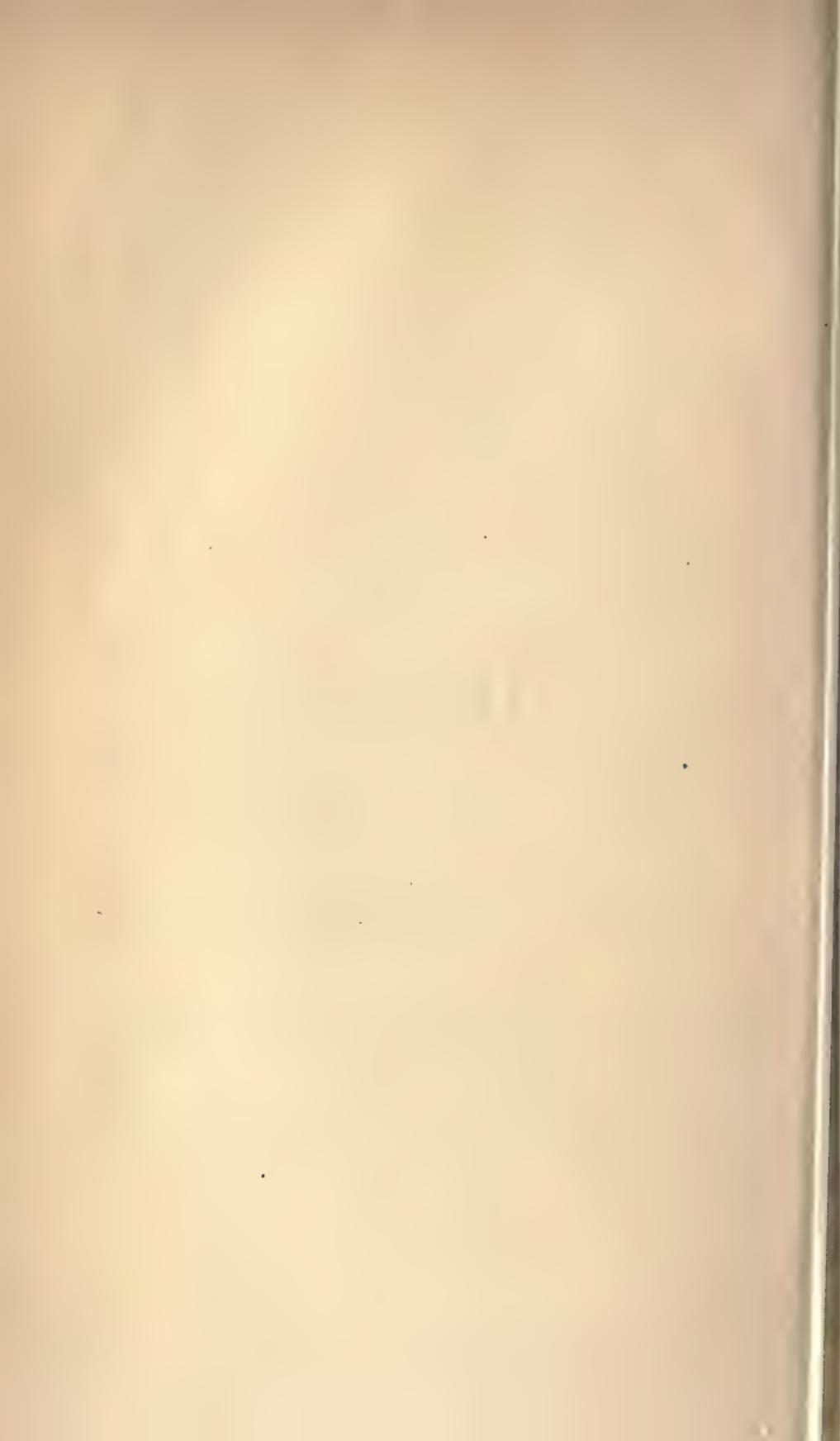
The great architectural edifices of a nation are monumental, and ought to be emblematic of their time. It is this which gives the charm to our noble cathedrals and other ecclesiastical and castellated remains in which the kingdom is rich, and which it is possible may be less prized as supreme structures of art than as the symbols of past life and animation. That which is dead can have no resurrection in the same bodily shape, though in form and spirit it may walk abroad; and it may be doubted whether the mediæval ruins of the island would not be deepened in veneration if left to their natural course of decay, in place of lame or abortive attempts at revival or restoration. They would certainly become more faithful testimonies of the past, and more picturesque, if their turrets, Gothic arches, prostrated walls, and broken shafts were allowed to be ivy-grown and owl-inhabited, like Chepstow Castle or Tintern Abbey. Our love of the picturesque must not, however, transport us into the mistake or extravagance of a popular lecturer, whose idolatry extends to the adoration of the gable ends, narrow streets, and cyclopean abutments of the middle ages. The pic-

turesque is not the beautiful ; there is utility in one, veneration or association only in the other. The aged are often picturesque ; but Mr. Ruskin would hardly identify them in honour or preference with a younger race, instinct with life and brilliant in attractions.

There is another relation beside Architecture, in which living art may be unworthily depreciated. Sir Joshua Reynolds may not have been greatly wrong in his first impressions on visiting Italy, when he thought and said that the old masters had been overrated. In chaste and correct taste, in ethereal spirit, in intellectuality, they are inferior, and their subjects mostly consecrate an idolatrous worship, which ought to form an item in their appraisement by a Protestant community. However it is as easy to babble on Paintings as on green fields, and I shall not enter on this issue. Wide scope for art in every branch is opening in the contemplated metropolitan improvements and Kensington additions, and it is desirable that they should be entered upon in a just and enlightened spirit. My wish is that the best may be foremost in art and artists, whether English or foreign ; only with the natural desire that native talent and worth may honourably win the greatest number of prizes.

With this aspiration I shall conclude. I have traversed the labyrinth I purposed, and tried—inadequately I fear, but not without a strenuous endeavour—fairly to set forth the varied phases in the progress of British civilisation from the time of the Druids till towards the close of the second decade of the reign of Queen Victoria.

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